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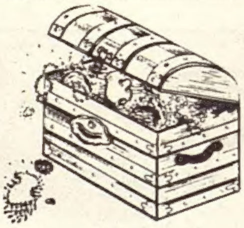

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The Sketch

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1952

KERIMA AS AISSA

"She knows no fear and no shame," wrote Joseph Conrad of his heroine in *Outcast of the Islands*. Carol Reed, an admirer of the book since his boyhood, produced and directed the film. He found Kerima in Algiers after a long hunt for a worthy Aissa. Filmgoers should be seeing her for the first time at the Plaza this Friday, January 18, with Sir Ralph Richardson, Robert Morley and Trevor Howard.

AT AN ADAM FIRESIDE: Mr. and Mrs. John Mills, with their daughters, Juliet (right) and Hayley; the dog, *Larry*, is being kept in the picture by his ears. The Mills family are At Home to *The Sketch* elsewhere in this issue.

Our Motley Notes

By Toby O'Brien

THOSE with a historical sense will be pleased at the fact that Mr. Churchill has revived the granting of baronetcies, after the short lapse under the Labour Government. The great territorial and industrial magnates who get the highest honours are not, if one may say so, of vital importance to the country. In the case of the former, most of them remain Whigs at heart anyway, and one is occasionally tempted to agree with that stout Tory, Squire Western, whom Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, makes remark about his great Whig neighbours: "Lords—I heate the very name of themmun!" Through the centuries, the real strength of the country has resided in the country families, usually untitled, but who through generations have kept their estates going and who, pre-eminently, have believed in the view that every privilege, whether enjoyed by a peer or a shop steward, is only justified by a countervailing sense of duty. A typical example is a family like the Asshetons, who have represented their part of the world in Parliament for centuries, or the Probys, honoured with this junior hereditary title in the case of that admirable figure, Major Richard Proby.

A baronetcy, it seems to me, represents a happy compromise between the hereditary and the pompous. It also gives scope for a certain amount of happy eccentricity, as in the case of Sir George Sitwell, or in that of Anthony Eden's father, the late Sir William Eden.

Sir William was probably one of the finest horsemen of his day. He was also probably the leading water-colorist, a title of which his somewhat absurd quarrel with Whistler could not deprive him. He had a remarkable temper, and I always like the story of the occasion when a meet of the South Durham hounds, of which he was Master, took place at his house, Windlestone. It was a filthy day, pouring with rain and blowing hard, so that the field came into the house for their stirrup-cups. Sir William, a magnificent-looking man, came down the stairs, strode through the throng without addressing anyone, and went

up to an eighteenth-century barometer on the wall. The barometer registered "Set Fair." He tapped it. It remained unmoved. He tapped it again. It still said "Set Fair." Whereupon the Master snatched it off the wall, marched to the hall door, threw it open, and sent the barometer skidding across the sodden gravel of the drive, exclaiming: "Look for yourself, you —— fool!"

A CURRENT photograph of the Prime Minister wearing the daytime uniform of an Elder Brother of Trinity House reminded me of what still remains the finest of the many examples of Winstonian French. When M. de Fleurieau was French Ambassador here some years before the last war, he was sitting next to Mr. Churchill at a City dinner. Mr. Churchill was wearing the evening dress of an Elder Brother of Trinity House. The Ambassador enquired what the uniform was, to which Mr. Churchill replied: "*Excellence, je vous dirai. Moi, je suis frère ainé de la Trinité.*" At which the astonished M. de Fleurieau ejaculated: "*Mon Dieu! Quelle belle situation!*"

Mr. Churchill's French is utterly fluent, but tends to be translated directly from the English. General de Gaulle was the astonished wartime recipient of many of his finer flights of linguistic fancy. On one occasion the leader of the Free French appealed to Mr. Churchill for further funds for the forces under his command. Mr. Churchill replied that he, personally, was entirely sympathetic: "*Mais devant la Vielle Dame de Threadneedle Street, je suis tout à fait impotent.*"

Nowadays, the standard of linguistic skill demanded of the members of our Foreign Service is extremely high. In earlier days, however, while there was, of course, generally speaking, an accepted proficiency, a John Bull-ish approach to foreign languages was not frowned on, at least as far as accent was concerned. A year or two before the war I was in the study of a distinguished British diplomat somewhere in the Balkans. He had occasion in my presence to ring up the Prime Minister-Dictator of the country, to protest about some breach of international etiquette, His Britannic Majesty's Minister's temper was obviously becoming distinctly frayed. Finally, passion got the better of urbanity and training. "*Mais alors, Excellence,*" he expostulated," *vous savez—c'est un peu trop!*"

AS the pantomime season draws to its close, I must once more voice my regret that old-fashioned pantomime is being gradually replaced by what appears to be a poor imitation of Transatlantic musical review. I have held strong views on the pantomime since earliest youth. Indeed, the first recorded example of theatrical criticism by O'Brien was when, at the age of six, at his first pantomime, after some glorious knockabout slapstick (and probably the Transformation Scene) a lady came on and sang a popular sentimental ballad of the day. An urgent voice rang through the stalls: "Mummy, Mummy," it said, "is the pantomime over now?"

Pantomime, to my mind, depends largely on the pantomime couplet, that admirable traditional art form, unhampered by undue attention to such little matters as scansion. A proper pantomime couplet should run something like this:

Hist! Who comes here? The Fairy Queen!
I think I'd better vanish from ther scene.

The old Lyceum pantomime was undoubtedly the best, the libretto being written for twenty years, I believe, by the box-office manager, who was one of the last past-masters of the pantomime couplet. Nowadays it is only in the smaller provincial theatres that it carries on a lingering existence, though I must record with delight going to see the Chelsea Palace pantomime with Doris Hare and a number of friends two or three years ago, and our joy in the final curtain-fall lines, spoken by the Baron Hard-up (in hunting costume which would cause a stir in the Quorn or Pytchley countries). They ran:

And now I 'ope you'll tell 'er,
'Ow much we've all enjoyed 'er—Cinder-RELLA.

While on the subject of Christmas shows, I recently saw one of surely the world's finest conjurers in the Swedish "magician," now touring this country, called "Kalanag." The other night, at that cradle of the great music-hall favourites, the Hackney Empire, we saw him make a Hillman Minx car, containing passengers, vanish before our eyes, bring a large, lighted oil-lamp down into the stalls and make it disappear into thin air, and pour out water from a jug which became transformed, at the request of individual members of the audience, into everything from Scotch to hot coffee, from port to crème de menthe, and from ice-cream to vinegar. I, of course, am one of those who prefer to believe that it is all done by magic. I was never the kind of little boy immortalised in—was it?—Jan Struther's poem, who remarked in penetrating tones: "I believe that he's got it up his sleeve." You may recall that the conjurer asked him to come up and learn his secrets, if he could. To which the horrid little boy, remarking: "Huh! You can't catch me," gleefully agreed. But, alas! when the conjurer had made a sudden pass:

His mother wildly glanced around,
The boy was nowhere to be found,
But in the conjurer's top-hat,
A third, and extra, *rabbit sat.*

The moral being:

Children, when you go to parties,
Don't behave like little smarties,
And even if you don't believe,
Just keep your knowledge up your sleeve.

LAST week I met at dinner Mr. Hamzawi, of the Persian Embassy, and his lovely wife, the daughter of my old friend, Sir Eric Crankshaw, who for so long ran the Government Hospitality Fund. Hamzawi, whose English is perfect, was most impressed recently, on handing in his coat at a cloakroom, and being asked his name, by the fact that the attendant wrote it down on a piece of paper without further query. He finds it rare in this country for people to be able to get his name right first time. He was, perhaps, a little less impressed, on later receiving the slip of paper back, to find that written on it was the single word: "Foreigner."

An excellent Transatlantic idea which has now come to this country is that of the "Finders' Dining Club"—an organisation which has over 40,000 members in the United States. Briefly, the idea is this. The member is given a card which enables him or her to go to any one of a number of leading restaurants and sign the bill. The Club takes the responsibility for the integrity of the luncher or diner, reimburses the restaurant, and sends in a monthly account. I can well imagine that this would be extremely popular with mothers or dowagers who have to entertain for débutante daughters. I can also imagine that Americans, who are used to the system over in the States, will be pleased to find similar facilities available for them in this country.

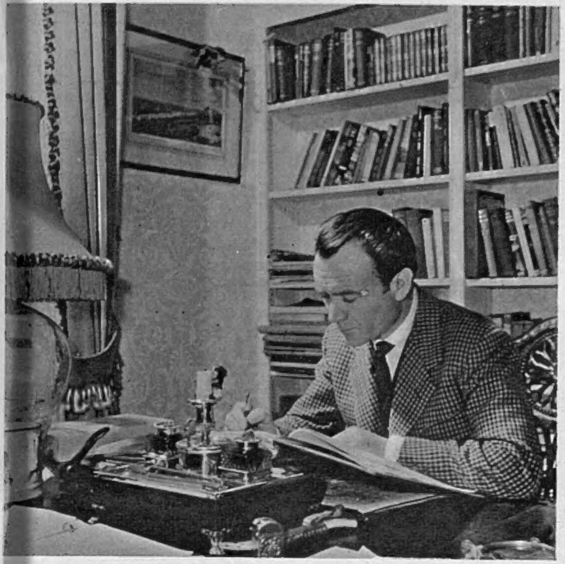
"Is that the Travel Bureau? It's about that guide you sent me—the one with a thorough knowledge of local contours."

EVENING CONFERENCE. At the end of the day Mr. and Mrs. John Mills discuss their work. She has just finished a new play, now at "correction stage." They are sitting in the fine, oval drawing-room of their home, "The Wick"; the curve of the ceiling can be seen in the looking-glass. Grinling Gibbons garlands decorate walls and ceiling and a complete Dresden monkey band is ready to strike up on the mantelpiece.

At Home to The Sketch

MR. AND MRS. JOHN MILLS AND FAMILY

(*Left.*) JONATHAN IS INTRIGUED. The whole family round the hall fire, Juliet on the left, then Hayley, with Jonathan demanding the attention of both parents. On the right of the Christmas-tree is one of the Victorian "tinsels" of actors of the day, which decorate the hall. The girls' kilts are the Macmillan tartan, to which they have a right through their mother's family.



DESK-TIED. Someone whose name is on so many posters has a great many letters to answer; John Mills deals with his in the study. There are bookshelves like the one behind him all round the room, and in the fireplace a cradle-like basket grate, which rocks when alight. Behind it is an attractive antique iron plaque, a gift from David Niven.

Our visit to Mr. and Mrs. John Mills began with delight, despite the poor weather, at the outside of their house, "The Wick," on Richmond Hill. Built in 1774, it is beautifully proportioned, with a pillared porch and exquisite fanlight. The inside is just as lovely, beginning with the hall, where we met the family: Mr. Mills, with his engagingly puzzled expression; Mrs. Mills, who is Mary Hayley-Bell, the authoress; Juliet, aged ten; Hayley, five; and Jonathan, two. As it was not yet Twelfth Night, we had the benefit of their Christmas decorations, including a lit-up, spangled tree. They have made an excellent job of furnishing and decorating the lovely rooms they showed us. The back windows look out on the river and a long garden which slopes down to a cottage and stables, where Mr. Mills keeps his polo pony; he started playing last summer and is very keen.

By THE SKETCH special photographer, Harold White, F.I.B.P., F.R.P.S.

(*Above.*) CONSERVATORY STUDIO. The large conservatory at the back of the house gives good light for painting, which is one of Mr. Mills's relaxations. Playing with his children is another; here, with Hayley and Jonathan beside him, he is combining the two. Polo and cricket are his favourite games; last year he was President of the Lord's Taverners, in which the Duke of Edinburgh is Twelfth Man.

(*Left.*) MONKEY BUSINESS. After sweets all round from the large tin, John Mills amuses his family with a favourite monkey. Jonathan is here solemn and absorbed, but if his father starts making faces to amuse, the son imitates them exactly.

(*Right.*) UP THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE. Jonathan is carried off to bed by his Nannie; his parents stand at the foot of the elegant staircase which winds up from the hall. There are attractive damask wallpapers all over the house; the hall carpet is an Aubusson. Mrs. Mills is just off to make a rabbit stew.

★ AT THE CINEMA ★

with C. A. LEJEUNE

I AM not, on the whole, enamoured with the practice of importing Hollywood stars and directors to work in British films; not so much on patriotic grounds, as because it rarely seems to turn out the right sort of picture. And if you ask me, "Right for Whom?" I would answer, "Right for anybody." The styles and tempi of story-telling in the two continents don't mix and there is always that tiresome business of the accents. It's such a bore having to pretend that every hero with an American voice has really come from Toronto or Montreal and that the heroine speaks English in the way she does because her father married a lady from New York. It may be true in certain cases, of course, but it doesn't seem likely to be true quite so often.

With the greater pleasure, then, I salute an Anglo-American film that really does come off. *The African Queen* is right for almost everybody, I should say. At any rate, it has proved very much to the taste of its first audience, and for once critics and public appear to be of a single mind. The piece, which is based on an early novel by that prince of story-tellers, C. S. Forester, was made in England and Africa by a British company. Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart were brought across to play the leading parts, and John Huston also came from Hollywood to direct. The photography was in the charge of Jack Cardiff, the British camera-man responsible for the beautiful colour-work of *The Black Narcissus*, *The Red Shoes* and other top-notch Technicolor jobs. The result is a brisk, businesslike and sometimes rather touching film, which holds the interest without a hint of flagging.

The African Queen is virtually a duet for two players. There are, of course, other characters in the piece, but only one of them, played by our Robert Morley, has more than a few lines to speak, and he is eliminated by the end of the first reel. The period is 1914 and the place German East Africa. The story is about an English missionary's sister and the tough Canadian skipper of a motor-launch (he was a Cockney in the Forester novel, but this time Canadian will do) who make their escape down-river at the outbreak of war.

The skipper is a gin-drinker, stubbled and uncouth. The missionary's sister is prim, tight-lipped and "not comely among the maidens," who embarks on the long journey in the wheezy crock of a river-boat in picture hat, button boots, whale-boned blouse, trailing skirt and white cotton gloves. For a little time she clings to these marks of respectability and addresses her odd companion with a frigid etiquette by the surname—but not for long.

As the dangers of the trip develop, so does the real character of the spinster. She begins to take a delight in handling the tiller, while her shipmate kicks obstinately at a mulish engine. She discovers the thrill of shooting the river rapids and navigating *The African Queen* safely through white water. One by one the accoutrements of her old life go; the hat, the boots, the blouse, the skirt, the gloves, until she is stripped for action in stocking feet and frilly, soaking underwear. The enforced companions stop addressing each other as "Mr. Allnutt" and "Miss," and call each other simply "Rose" and "Charley." Rose throws the gin into the river and Charley handsomely removes the stubble. And by the time they have combated rapids, crocodiles, Germans, rhinos, torrential rains, tropical heat, mosquitoes, mud-flats and leeches, they have fallen enough in love to want to make the partnership a permanent one.

But this is not the end of the transformation of the quiet missionary lady. Now that she is roused, she is *really* roused. Her British blood boils with patriotic fervour. In the lake near the mouth of the river, her Charley tells her, there is a German gunboat, the *Queen Louisa*. Do let us, she says, be beastly to the Germans. Why not fix home-made torpedoes to *The African Queen* and blow up the horrid *Louisa*? Impossible, says the cautious Charley. Nonsense, replies the intrepid Rose. And what's more, she adds, let us polish the torpedoes and scrub the decks and run up the Union Jack, and consider ourselves the representatives of the Royal Navy. And so they do.

The African Queen, as you can see, is a straightforward and simple story which gained its effect, in the first instance, from Forester's vivid power of story-telling. Clumsy acting, insensitive direction, would have ruined its translation to the screen. But happily there is neither. John Huston, whose American Civil War film, *The Red Badge of Courage*, after a sticky start in this country, is now drawing real queues to Leicester Square, was probably the ideal man to direct it. He has imagination. He knows every technical trick of film-making. He can handle actors. He loves England. Humphrey Bogart, after a long run of indifferent parts, gets one at last that he can clamp his teeth into. And Katharine Hepburn, who is not an easy actress to cast, finds an overdue chance to combine her fine comedy sense with the touching, shy humanity that made her first films (*A Bill of Divorcement*, *Morning Glory*, *Little Women*) so radiant. I like almost everything about *The African Queen*, but I would slip Miss Hepburn the palm.

The recorded history of America is so short, and its chroniclers so anxious to get the most out of it, that picturegoers are constantly stumbling across the same chaps, shown from a different viewpoint in different stories. In *Lone Star* (which even the most ignorant foreigner will guess has something to do with Texas) we encounter no fewer than three of our old friends, President Andrew Jackson, Sam Houston and Gieronimo. All these three have been in their time film heroes on their own account, and it is a little disconcerting to find them tossed, with a light hand, into a film which shows how Miss Ava Gardner, by discarding Mr. Broderick Crawford as a suitor in favour of Mr. Clark Gable, brought the lone star into the galaxy of the Star-Spangled Banner, and, incidentally, provoked a war with Mexico.

I learn from our stalwart old friend Synopsis that *Lone Star* springs from a "screenplay by Borden Chase, from the magazine story by Borden Chase, based on the screen story by Howard Estabrook." You will see that this convolution *can* be worked out, after a little thought, but the suggestion remains, and is not contradicted by the film, that some writer, somewhere, wasn't quite what the doctor ordered. The rough outline of the film, however, is clear enough. The pioneer patriots of the Republic of Texas were brave and honest men, but they were exploited, for political reasons, by the Mexicans, the British and the French; and it was the proper thing, the enlightened thing, but the hard thing, for the Union to annex and put a fence round Texas.

Regarded as a clear Western, *Lone Star* is remarkably well done. It has its silly moments, but the requisite action, the speed, the hunting and shooting, is all most satisfactorily there. A vigorous pitched battle at the end leaves one tingling with such excitement as can be extracted from a film with lots of bang-bang and practically no think-think. But then it would be a poor look-out for everybody if one depended upon second thoughts in pictures.

There are two new Italian films that you might care to look at. Neither is in the first class, although *The City Defends Itself* did win one of those top festival awards at Venice. It is a gangster film, about four amateur cracksmen who find that crime doesn't pay, and, although bursting with clichés, it has some impressive moments and a haunting little theme tune. *Ore 9: Lezione di Chinica*, with a very *jeune fille* Valli, takes place in a select finishing school which provides everything for the lucky girls, even a *Man*. It is remarkably silly, but in its small way, rather sweet. As a child, I was forbidden to read the innocent works of one L. T. Meade. Of course, I did, and this film's gushing maidenhood reminds me of those stolen pleasures.

MRS. PUTTS — By PETER ENDER

"THE AFRICAN QUEEN"

This new film, directed by John Huston from the novel by C. S. Forester, with Humphrey Bogart as Charlie Allnutt, Katherine Hepburn as Rose Sayer and Robert Morley as Brother Samuel Sayer, opened at the Warner Theatre, Leicester Square, last week.

Charlie Allnutt, a tough, gin-drinking Canadian engineer, carries mail and wares on his own small steamer, the *African Queen*, to the remote missionary village of Kundu, which is run by Brother Samuel Sayer and his sister Rose. Charlie, of whom they disapprove, warns them that their part of Africa has been invaded by the Germans, who arrive soon after he leaves. Fire, pilfering and chaos follow ; Brother Samuel dies, and Rose, left alone, is rescued by Charlie, who takes her aboard the "Queen." A perilous journey follows. At first Rose bores Charlie to further gin by her obsession to avenge her brother. Gradually danger draws them together ; before the "Queen" capsizes and they are captured by a gunboat, they are in love. The Germans are about to hang them when they are saved by the "Queen," crammed with home-made torpedoes, exploding and scattering the enemy.

When Charlie arrives at Kundu, Brother Samuel Sayer is conducting a native service ; his sister Rose, prim and grim, plays the harmonium. They have devoted their lives to the missionary settlement.

Chaos after invasion by the Germans. The natives are rounded up ; the settlement is on fire. Brother Samuel, heartbroken, has tried to interfere, but been struck down. Despite Rose's devoted nursing, he dies ; Charlie, who has warned the Sayers of their danger, arrives in time to bury Brother Samuel, and take Rose aboard the *African Queen*. He is pessimistic about their chances on the dangerous journey ahead ; she is obsessed with the desire to avenge her brother. This exasperates Charlie, but as they gradually become fond of one another, he shares her determination.

On their terrifying river journey Charlie Allnutt and Rose Sayer have to hack a way for the *African Queen* through clutching weeds. Later she capsizes and they are captured by the Germans.

Penultimate moment : Charlie and Rose have been condemned to death by hanging and he is desperately trying to free her just before the "Queen" comes to their rescue by exploding.

THE COUNTESS OF HADDINGTON

This portrait by Sir Oswald Birley was shown in the November-December exhibitic of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters. The Countess of Haddington and her sister the Countess of Minto are two beautiful Canadians, daughters of Mr. G. W. Cook of Montreal. Lady Haddington has a son, Lord Binning, born in 1941 and a daughter, Lady Mary Baillie-Hamilton, whose eighteenth birthday was last Sunday, January 13, and for whom a wonderful dance was given in June last year at Syon House, Brentford, which was lent to her parents by the Duke of Northumberland. Built in the sixteenth century, Syon is pale and castellated and looked enchanting and enchanted by floodlight. Six hundred guests enjoyed the ball.

Excerpts from our Social Diary

DEC. 26.—FAMILY GROUP. Lord and Lady Raglan gave an "Edwardian Costume" ball at their home, Cefntilla Court, Usk. Here is the family, complete with fans: Left to right: The Hon. Janetta Somerset, the Hon. Geoffrey Somerset, the Hon. Cecily Somerset, the Hon. Fitzroy Somerset, Miss Ann Moseley (cousin of Lady Raglan), Lord Raglan, Lady Raglan, Miss Ann Griffith.

DEC. 27.—WESTERLY GALE. Candles as well as flames lean away from the prevailing wind from the left at the fourth birthday party of Miss Nina Drummond-Hay, youngest daughter of Major James and Lady Margaret Drummond-Hay, who is a sister of the Duke of Hamilton.

DEC. 29.—GO-STOP-GO. Mr. and Mrs. Winston Churchill at Waterloo at the start of his journey to the U.S. which was temporarily stopped by the *Queen Mary's* anchor trouble and further delayed by gales in the Atlantic.

DEC. 29.—A HORSE FOR THE HURDLES. Lord Burghley, the famous hurdler, is Master of the East Sussex Foxhounds, which met near Battle Abbey. He is heir to the Marquess of Exeter and, among many activities, Chairman of the British Olympic Council: His personal prowess includes being a brilliant after-dinner speaker.

DEC. 30.—PRINCESSES ON SKIS. The Crown Princess of Holland, Princess Beatrix, and her sister, Princess Irene, are seen here at St. Anton, where the Dutch Royal Family are staying.

[Continued overleaf.

Excerpts from our Social Diary

MR. MICHAEL TREE, MR. MARK BONHAM-CARTER AND LADY ANN TREE.

MR. AND LADY ELIZABETH VON HOFMANNSTHAL.

THE HON. JOHN McLAREN AND MRS. A. WELDON.

THE HON. LAURA SMITH AND MR. MICHAEL BRAND.

DEC. 31.—THE CHELSEA ARTS BALL. Most people laughed the old year out, some thousands of them at the Albert Hall. Mr. Michael and La Ann Tree looked dressed for action; Mr. Mark Bonham-Carter had the responsibility of a beard. Lady Elizabeth von Hofmannsthal is a sister-in-la of Hon. John McLaren; photographed with Mrs. A. Weldon. The Hon. Laura Smith is with Mr. Michael Brand, disguised as a tough.

JAN. 2.—CELEBRATING THEIR INDEPENDENCE DAY. The Haitian Minister and Mme. Love O. Leger are on the left, at the party they gave celebrate the anniversary of Haiti's independence from France, which started on January 1, 1804. There were many Ambassadors and Ministers the party, including, on the right, General Shanker, Nepalese Ambassador, the Ranee Shanker and Marshal Shah Wali, Afghanistan Ambassad French was the language most spoken; the Haitians have kept it despite their long independence.

JAN. 2.—TO GO ON ROYAL TOUR. Lady Pamela Mountbatten, photographed at home in her parents' Wilton Crescent house, is to be a Lady-in-Waiting to Princess Elizabeth.

JAN. 3.—LIVING ON THE THAMES. Earl and Countess Jermyn on their yacht home, which is moored in the Thames. With Mr. Moss Goodman he founded and became joint managing director of Empire Film Productions; is heir to the Marquess of Bristol and a fortune of a million-and-a-quarter.

JAN. 3.—COCKTAILS IN QUEEN'S GATE. *On the left* are Mr. Isidor Levinter, K.C., Mrs. Rudolf Comacho, Mr. John Meadows Marsh, K.C., and Mr. Rudolf Comacho, the Jamaican tenor. He and his wife gave a party at their Queen's Gate flat for the two K.C.s, who are both here on a visit from Canada. *On the right*, Princess Irene Wisznieuska is with the Ranee Shanker, wife of General Shanker, Nepalese Ambassador. During the evening Mr. Comacho sang some of the songs with which he recently delighted a large audience at the Royal Festival Hall.

JAN. 4.—AMBASSADOR HOST. The Burmese Ambassador, U Ka Si, greets Earl and Countess Mountbatten at the party given at Londonderry House to celebrate the anniversary of the independence of Burma.

JAN. 5.—HAPPY WEDDING TO THEM. Everyone looks delighted while the bride cuts the cake. She is Miss Diane Cecilia Cathery, daughter of Mrs. James Grimditch, of Tudor Court, Esher, marrying Mr. Michael Henry Wise, Grenadier Guards, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wise.

[Continued overleaf.

JAN. 5.—TRUMPETED ON THEIR WAY. Mr. W. D. Spiller, R.H.A., son of Mr. and Mrs. C. Spiller, Early Lodge, Reading, leaving St. Peter's Church, Marlow, with his bride, who was Miss Joan Welch, daughter of Major and Mrs. J. Welch, of Little Hampden.

JAN. 5.—IN GOLD AND ERMINE. Miss Christian Carnegy, of Lour, wore a gold dress trimmed with ermine for her marriage to Mr. John Lindsey Eric Smith at Forfar.

Excerpts from our Social Diary

JAN. 6.—Princess Margaret leaving the Parish Church of Greenlaw after Sunday morning service.

JAN. 7.—Princess Margaret with, left, Miss Ann Somerset, Mrs. McEwen in the background, and Lady Hesketh, at a meet of the Buccleuch Hunt.

JAN. 7.—(Right) Princess Margaret and the Earl of Dalkeith among the Buccleuch hounds when they met at Hume Castle.

JAN. 6 & 7.—AT MEETING-HOUSE AND MEET. While staying with Captain and Mrs. J. H. F. McEwen at Marchmont House, Berwickshire, Princess Margaret included Sunday church and a meet of the local hounds among her many activities. Warmly booted, she watches Lord Dalkeith being greeted by some of the pack; smiles as they move off (centre, right). Lady Hesketh is Mrs. McEwen's daughter and has six brothers. Others in the Marchmont house party were Mr. Ian and Lady Caroline Gilmour, Mr. Robert Lubbock, Major Simon Phipps and Miss Ann Somerset, seen wearing a kilt and duffle coat at the meet.

The children assemble at the entrance and Sir Harry Brittain greets Celia Benham of South Africa House before conducting his tour of the Exhibition.

A DAY OUT FOR THE JUNIOR "CORPS DIPLOMATIQUE"

Over ninety children from Embassies and Legations here spent a happy morning "having a go" at the Schoolboys Own Exhibition at the Horticultural Hall. They were invited and shown round by Sir Harry Brittain, who is President of the Exhibition for the eighteenth time. Everything a boy, and most present-day girls, could want to see, try and know about, is provided—and there is plenty to suggest future careers. The Services and many industries have stands; agriculture, horticulture, photography, chemistry, etc., are represented, and for those who want to be engine drivers, there is a model railway they can operate themselves.

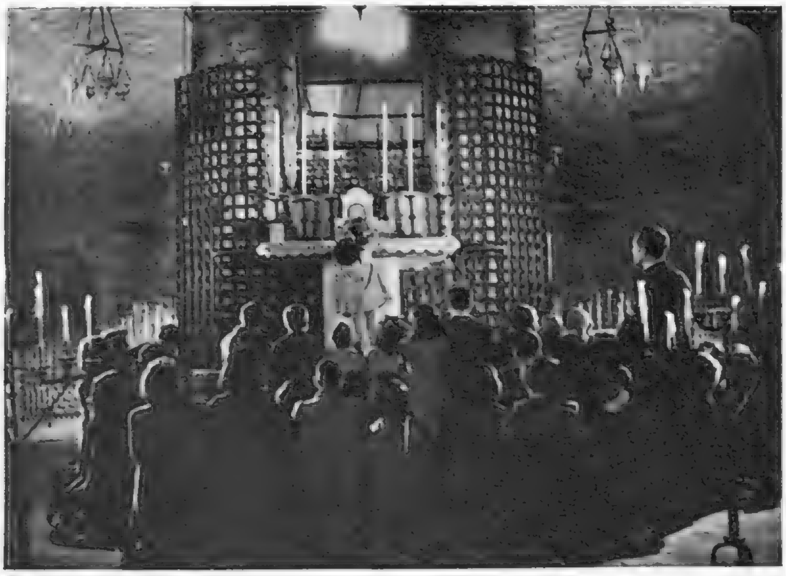
R. C. Harding, son of the naval liaison officer at New Zealand House, coming down on the Army's parachute apparatus.

The girls enjoyed it as much as the boys. Carmen Ruiz Morales, daughter of the Spanish Commercial Counsellor, after landing.

Watching the parachute drops are Denika and Swinitha Jayasuriya from Ceylon, with two little boys from the Spanish Embassy, and, behind, Reena Farouki of Jordan. On the right, actual airborne landings are screened.

In the foreground, among these admirers of the model railway, are Peter Edelman of the Netherlands and Edward Fox, whose father is in the Information Office at Canada House.

Recording her energy: Danish Elsebet Jegstrup at the British Electrical Development Association Stand, which provides an amusing try your strength device.



The children of Assisi gather in the tomb of St. Francis to pay homage to the saint who loved all animals, and in whose powers of healing they have unquestioning faith.

Peppino, stricken by the illness of his beloved donkey *Violetta*, determines to see the Pope and plead permission to take *Violetta* to the shrine of St. Francis.

Arrived at the Vatican, Peppino spends most of his small store of money on a bunch of flowers which he hands (*left*) to a guard with a message for the Pope, and waits (*right*) in innocent anticipation of an immediate audience.

A SMALL MIRACLE

Paul Gallico, author of that lovely story *The Snow Goose*, is responsible for the theme of one of the most appealing films of recent years, *Never Take No for an Answer*, now running at the Rialto, Coventry Street. Based on his book *The Small Miracle*, the film tells the story of an Italian orphan boy, Peppino, and his beloved donkey, *Violetta*. When *Violetta* falls ill, Peppino, brought up with unshakeable faith in the miraculous healing powers of St. Francis, overcomes all obstacles placed in his path—obstacles which to a grown-up would have seemed insuperable—in order to obtain an audience of the Pope and beg his dispensation for the tomb of St. Francis to be unwalled so that he may lead *Violetta* to the shrine of the saint and plead for her recovery. Made by a British company in the lovely settings of Assisi and the Vatican, the result is a film of great and simple beauty. The sturdy performance of the small boy Vittorio Manunta as Peppino will not easily be forgotten.

Despite many mishaps and agonising disappointments, the flowers and message reach the Pope, and Peppino is led past the imposing figures of other supplicants for an audience with His Holiness.

The dispensation is granted, the tomb is unwalled, and Peppino leads *Violetta* through a blaze of light into the shrine of St. Francis.

Photographed by Baron.

KATHERINE DUNHAM

Dancer, choreographer, director and actress, she is the mainspring of her new show (at the Cambridge Theatre), which combines a primitive violence of sight, sound and movement with the style and polish of considerable art. Besides a complete ballet, *L'Ag'Ya*, the company perform a variety of songs and dances derived from the folk art of Brazil, Martinique and the Southern States of North America. In 1948 they were seen here in *Caribbean*, which was wholly West Indian; in the new show, only one number, "Shango," a stylised sacrificial dance, comes from that enchanted climate, which may strike some of her established admirers as a loss. She and her company are proposing to remain here for a season of four months.

★ First Choice ★

AT THE THEATRE . .

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

(Old Vic)

FIRST choice, yes: the *Dream,* surely, must always be that, whenever it is revived. But I am not persuaded that we shall think in future of this mid-winter production as our first choice from revivals of the last decade.

Something is wrong now with the spirit of the Athenian wood at the Old Vic. The wood is not haunted; the fairies do not keep their revels. True, we have an Oberon, a Titania, a Puck; but these are not the Immortals we remember. Oberon, who should be of music all compact, is strangely off the note; Titania has a grotesque make-up (Jill Balcon is too apt an actress, too sensitive a speaker, to be handicapped in this way); and Puck is not so much a "lob of spirits," a "merry wanderer of the night," as a brisk, intelligent schoolboy. Except for Titania, the population of the wood seems to be exclusively male. We can agree that, at any rate, these are not what an undoubted authority once called, in rage, "painty-winged, wand-waving, sugar-and-shake-your-head." But I do not believe that they are a reasonable exchange.

Its Immortals aside (and one should not have to say this of any revival of the loveliest fantasy in our tongue), the new Tyrone Guthrie *Dream* has a good many pleasures. I would be the last to complain vigorously of the absence of Mendelssohn. Shakespeare's verse has never needed extraneous help. And the unadorned glade, the silver-glimmering, mooncast wood at the Old Vic, with a classical landscape dim behind it, is a setting enchanted in "spangled starlight sheen," one that does honour to Tanya Moiseiwitsch. We have no trouble with either Romantics or Mechanicals. Irene Worth as Helena, fluttering, wide-eyed, petulant; and Jane Wenham, a resolute, eager little Hermia, are expertly matched with the Demetrius (Douglas Wilmer) and Lysander (Robert Shaw); and the lovers' entanglements that can grow tiresome are gay and swift.

Last, the Mechanicals. In this revival they come first. A respected colleague, who has suggested that the accent of Paul Rogers (as Bottom) is merely theatrical Mummerset, should be taken at once to the heart of Devon. Bottom's dialect would not sound amiss in any of the Phillpotts novels. He could step right into the bar of Reuben Shillabeer's Corner House, or pass the time of day with Churdles Ash. Paul Rogers is a natural comedian—better than in the more sardonic parts, for which he is often cast—and here he never overplays his hand. It is an earthy, quiet performance, an admirably wise choice. The other Mechanicals are efficiently in support; Alan Badel (Quince), whose accent has an Irish note, is charmingly anxious and preoccupied. (Can this be Tyrone Guthrie's idea of a producer?) Once more, too, Guthrie has achieved the miracle of pouring from an apparently empty jug. One would have thought that every line of "Pyramus and Thisby" had been explored long ago for fresh humours. But Guthrie has found treasure, and without noticeable effort.

A final delight. Actors, for some reason, see little to reward them in the part of Theseus. I have had many times to moan about a cut-to-pattern "utility Duke." Now, and mercifully, we have Douglas Campbell at the Vic, a personage gracious and commanding, to remind us that, after all, this is the Theseus of golden classical legend, the man that slew the Minotaur.

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.'

Above: *The rehearsal scene; in front, Flute (John Walker) and Quince (Alan Badel); behind, l. to r., Starveling (Percy Herbert), Bottom (Paul Rogers), Snug (Rupert Davies) and Snout (James Ottaway).* Right: *Hermia (Jane Wenham) and Helena (Irene Worth).*

Still Going Strong

COMEDIANS are in full cry—not the phrase, perhaps—all over the West End. Take three of them: Jack Hulbert for one. That long, jutting chin, that cheerful-challenging eye, the fluent speech: in the past these have been used in the service of musical comedy. Now Hulbert is playing "straight" for the first time in the London theatre (television is another story), and decorating the part of Britain's Ace of Crooks. He is a prosperous householder, a churchwarden; he lives in law-abiding Hampstead: only his family and close friends know of his true talent, of the hidden press-cuttings book, the superb burglar's kit, the training that has made of him the Raffles of his day. Gerald du Maurier used to present Raffles; some of Hulbert's watchers have seen a certain likeness to du Maurier in the silk-lined ease with which Hulbert coaxes the part along. It is a farce of paradox, wittily devised. The First Burglar has to save his forger-son from the perils of going "straight" (not in the theatrical sense this time), and none can steer the play to success more surely than Hulbert is doing with *The White Sheep of the Family* at the Piccadilly Theatre —with a topical curtain-speech thrown in, night by night.

Then Peter Ustinov, in his own play, *The Love of Four Colonels,* at Wyndham's. As a dramatist he has usually a surprise in the bag, and we are sure that he will allow himself plenty to act. In this exuberance he has five parts: he might well be in revue. The business is wildly fantastic: the four Colonels, the Immortals, the German castle, the Sleeping Beauty, the pack of plays-within-a-play. Ustinov likes fantasy, and he enjoys hard work. I shall think of him here as the glum Shakespearean clown in a crafty bit of pastiche, and as the wandering Russian snatched from any play by Tchehov.

At the Strand, Leslie Henson will be Samuel Pepys for some time yet. It has been pleasant to see how the first of our musical comedians has subdued himself and loyally offered a Pepys without a hint of false clowning. When he can be Hensonian without harming the play (*And So to Bed*), he takes the chance delightedly: the flageolet-mime has already become part of the Henson legend (with such a different thing as that seidlitz-powder effervescence in *Bob's Your Uncle*). Throughout the piece—we are sorry that he must hide so long in a chest—Henson keeps well in character, and I am glad indeed to realise that Samuel Pepys had that goldfish-and-tortoise face and that ingratiating croak. Historians may speak differently. Let them: this is not official History, it is Henson, and we are the better for it. (Let's all go down the Strand.)

. . with J. C. TREWIN

Plans for the Future

THIS year we shall be adventuring often to the Winter Garden and the Westminster. At the Winter Garden the Arts Theatre Club, under Alec Clunes, will stage a series of plays, beginning on January 29, with Christopher Fry's *The Firstborn* in a revised version. This is the Old Testament drama not yet seen in London. John Fernald produces, with Alec Clunes at the head, and sets by Michael Warre. The Winter Garden, Llewellyn Rees as administrator, will sell its top-price stalls at 10s. 6d.—the company is non-profit-distributing—and about 500 seats at 3s. or less. After a five-weeks run of *The Firstborn*, we shall have Farquhar's *The Constant Couple* and a revival of *The Merchant of Venice*. It is a season with great possibilities.

THE MASK

On January 23, the London Mask Theatre will reopen at the Westminster, the house where it was so successful thirteen years ago. As before, there will be short runs of approximately four weeks each. The first play, Ireland Wood's *Sunset in Knightsbridge*, is based on Pamela Hansford Johnson's novel, *An Avenue of Stone*.

PRIZE-WINNER

Yvonne Mitchell, one of our best (and unluckiest) young actresses, wrote *The Same Sky*, which begins at the Lyric, Hammersmith, during the week of January 28. I saw this touching little piece—set in the East End during wartime—when it was done at the Nottingham Playhouse last spring (under the title of *Here Choose I*), and won an Arts Council prize of £100 : Miss Mitchell in luck for once.

ST. JAMES'S

Sir Laurence Olivier is still in New York, but he has arranged for his first presentation of the year at the St. James's. This will be *The Happy Time*, on January 30, a dramatisation by Samuel Taylor of Robert Fontaine's chronicle of a French-Canadian family at Ottawa in the 1920's. It has been most successful in New York. Ronald Squire, Peter Finch, Rachel Kempson, Genevieve Page, Andrew Ray, and the producer himself (George Devine), are in the cast.

GETTING ROUND

Jean Kent and Griffith Jones will act during the spring in a romantic costume drama, *The Moonraker*. . . . John Harrison's first production at the Nottingham Repertory (January 28) is *Macbeth*. . . . Denis Carey's revival of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, from Bristol, begins at the Old Vic on February 19.

★ Also Chosen ★

THIEVES' CARNIVAL

(Arts Theatre Club)

THE week's Anouilh is an old one, though new to London : a mild, ring-o'-roses, flick-and-trick charade that the author calls a " ballet-comedy," and that Lucienne Hill has adapted with a swift grace—alas, not always visible in the speaking at the Arts. I enjoyed this little piece at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre : London, I fear, falls behind the Midlands, though three performances at least—those of John Laurie, Maxine Audley, and Robin Bailey—have the needed style, and I should welcome the toffee-apple voice of David Bird if it were merely reciting the railway guide.

Anouilh for once neither mopes nor grates. He is not pointing a way to the tomb. He is not being especially cynical, especially sophisticated. He is just running on about three adaptable thieves (at a French spa) who impersonate grandees of Spain, and who—unknowingly—are being used as marionettes by a bored Englishwoman. It is all thoroughly nonsensical : the sort of thing I find beguiling, but which, no doubt (if one is out of the vein), can seem like flat mineral-water. The person of whom I tire most easily is an ever-present faun-Musician, with his perky caperings, his too-whimsical pipings. The fellow is a bore : we are glad to be rid of him by a happily unexpected line in the last act.

THIEVES' CARNIVAL (Arts Theatre Club).

Robin Bailey develops his unforced charm as the Third Robber who appears likely to live happily ever after with the girl of the house (Elizabeth Henson's talent grows). Maxine Audley discovers a nice glumness ; and that fine actor, John Laurie, can catch the charade-sense of the whole preposterous affair, with his Peterbono, eldest of the pickpockets, who looks like Quixote.

THE PANTOMIMES

(Casino, Princes, Palladium)

THERE was one shattering moment at the London Casino when an odd gaggle of folk, including—I am surprised to say—the Emperor of China, hurtled in and out of revolving doors in the Imperial Baths. They were pursued by a ghost, no turnip-lantern, but a prodigious, sheeted spectre. By the end of the chase I was faint with laughter. Don't ask me why it was funny. We get the same scene, in one form or another, every Christmas ; and as soon as the tumbling begins I am helpless. Some people like crockery-smashing ; others prefer a good lather-and-dab of paste ; for others again there is nothing like a sudden sprawling tumble. Each to his choice. At Christmas I wait for the revolving doors, and all is well at the Casino.

Aladdin, elaborate and pictorial, has too little of this nonsense, but it chunners along blithely, thanks to Nat Jackley's Dame, a contorted giraffe. And Julie Andrews has the best singing voice in the three main pantomimes. *Cinderella* (Princes), rougher-and-readier, is certainly " traditional " and friendly : you may be startled to hear yourself singing, at Derek Roy's urgent command, that yum-yum-yum you love your tum : one of the season's more remarkable lyrics. For me the major personality in pantomime this year is Terry-Thomas, King of the Palladium's *Humpty Dumpty*. This is staged with uncommon splendour, panto-fashion, but I remember first the cigarette-holder, the gleaming teeth, and the good-show drawl of Terry-Thomas as the queerest crowned head pantomime has yet produced. He has a foil in Norman Evans, as a North Country Dame who keeps her chin up, and who stands no nonsense. I am sorry that there are no revolving doors : not a sign of them.

ALADDIN (Casino).

HUMPTY DUMPTY (Palladium).

CINDERELLA (Princes).

"THE SLEEPING BEAUTY"

★

A Brilliant Covent Garden Revival

Last Wednesday's scintillating revival of *The Sleeping Beauty* by the Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden was a personal triumph for Miss Beryl Grey, who danced the Princess Aurora with a confidence and spirit that won unstinted applause from a critical audience—a performance in which she had admirably loyal support from Mr. John Field as Prince Florimund.

Mr. Oliver Messel's lovely scenery had been repainted for the occasion, and many of the costumes renewed, and this, allied to a magnificent effort by the whole company and a delightfully fresh rendering of Tchaikovsky's score by the orchestra under Mr. Robert Irving, achieved one of the most colourful versions of *The Sleeping Beauty* to have been seen at Covent Garden for many years.

The production includes what must be the most spectacular fire-and-brimstone explosion ever to have heralded the irruption of the Wicked Fairy Carabosse, who is danced with that excess of vindictiveness which we have come to expect from Mr. Frederick Ashton. Our picture shows Carabosse at the moment when, her curse nullified by the Lilac Fairy, she is bidden begone by King Florestan and his Court.

★

Specially photographed for "THE SKETCH" by Roger Wood.

OUR BOOKSHELF

A MOUSE IS BORN. By Anita Loos. (*Cape; 10s. 6d.*)

WAGON-WHEELS. By Jim Phelan. (*Harrap; 12s. 6d.*)

A WINDOW ON A HILL. By Richard Church. (*Hale; 15s.*)

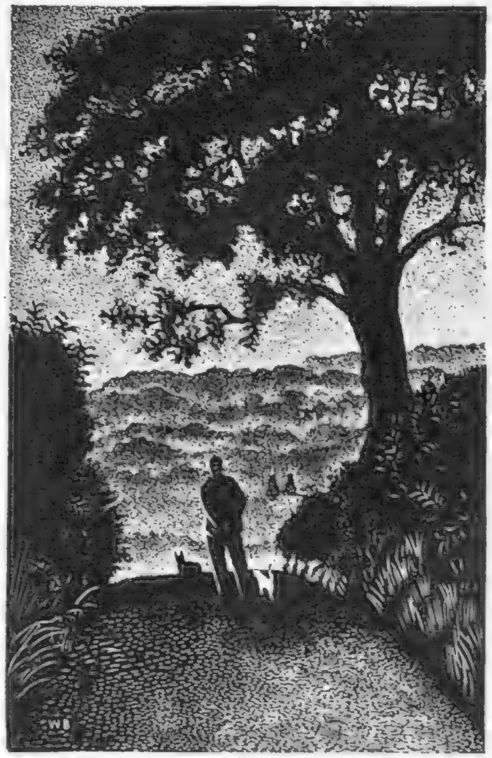
ALIAS BASIL WILLING. By Helen McCloy. (*Gollancz; 9s. 6d.*)

by RUPERT CROFT-COOKE

MISS ANITA LOOS, in *A Mouse is Born*, seeks to recapture the beautiful idiocy which made *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* a world-wide favourite. Her heroine, this time a film-star called Effie Huntriss, is as bubbly and witless as her predecessor, as naughty and naïve, and her antics are quite as amusing. But it is no longer possible to laugh as unconcernedly as we did, for, as the publishers remind us in the blurb, we must realise now that this is social satire. What once seemed no more than a very good joke now has a wry significance which somewhat curdles its humour.

Effie considers a Career *versus* Motherhood, and decides to make the sacrifice, although it means giving up her part in *The Road to Coney Island* and losing the interest of her third husband, Clyde Babcock. Clyde is starring in a Hollowood production of *Richard III.*, but his director "didn't know anything about Shakespeare, because he came from a stage theatre in London called the Old Vick, where Clyde said it was evident they had never heard tell of Profile." Effie suspects Clyde of interest in his new leading lady, Inga Swansen, who was "born with the kind of eye-lashes that the remainder of we stars have to buy at Max Factors and stick on with spirit gum." Effie, meanwhile, has visits from a former husband or two and from Dockie Davis, who gives her injections to quieten her nerves, and from Morrie, her business manager, and from one of her script writers, who was "a famous lady authoress," and from "a wonderful boy named Vernon," who runs the Browser's Nook and selects literature for her, and from a good many other friends, while she waits for the arrival of her Little Mouse. "Clyde and I love to call it our Little Mouse because I feel the word mouse is bi-sexual and will fit it no matter what it turns out to be." What in fact it does turn out to be, and of the lawsuit which followed its birth and of Effie's new career "where I am not dependint on a Publick which decides, overnight, that you can't act," the reader can learn from her own uncorrected words. Myself, I find it sad, if compelling, reading.

THE worst of gypsies, as a subject for literature is that they are incorrigible leg-pullers and love nothing better than a credulous non-gypsy with a pencil and notebook whom they can mischievously beguile. Mr. Jim Phelan, the author of *Wagon-Wheels*, must have been a popular visitor to their encampments, for he believes, and in this book retails, the most astonishing miscellany of fables, sometimes romantic, sometimes a trifle silly. He believes, for instance, that his own arrest in place of one of the Bakers is remembered from Bodmin Moor to the Pass of Killiecrankie; that the Scamps (or Scampes, as he calls them) are a Suffolk tribe; that England is divided into the territories of the various mumping or half-bred families he knows ("Suffolk is the Scampe country. North were the Bakers of Norfolk, with exactly as many people as Norfolk will support. West were the Smiths in Hertfordshire, with as many people as their country can maintain. South were the Brants of Essex and over the river were the Colins in Kent"); that the "wagon-dwelling population in England has remained about the same since Tudor times"; that members of a family called Fay still remember the writ which James V. of Scotland drew up in 1540 in favour of "oure louit John Faw, lord and erle of Litill Egipt." He speaks of wagon-dwellers of Tudor times, though the gypsy caravan is less than two centuries old and its owners still sleep in tents pitched beside it more often than inside it. Moreover, his illustrator appears to believe that the chimney of a living-wagon rises out of its bunk, for both on the wrapper and throughout the book he depicts it in the nearside rear of the wagon. The interior planning of these vehicles is as stereotyped as that of pre-fabricated houses; even the home-constructed ones never vary from it and have the stove immediately to the left of the entrance and the bunk across the back. All this is a pity, because Mr. Phelan has clearly enjoyed his hours with travelling people, knows some of their good qualities, and when he is not being sentimental about them says a number of things that needed to be said. Also, he is honest enough to admit that he refers to wagon-dwellers rather than gypsies, and so disclaims acquaintance with Romani lore. His book will not add much to general knowledge of the subject, but it revives some of its old legends quite entertainingly.



One of C. W. Bacon's striking illustrations in Richard Church's "A Window on a Hill."

A CALM, friendly book, difficult to classify, but enchantingly easy to read, is *A Window on a Hill*, by Richard Church. It is not quite a book of essays, nor of fragments; it is not all a countryman's panorama, nor, by any means entirely, a bookman's musings. It takes its title from the fact that the author lives in a converted oast-house with a study which looks far across Kent and Sussex, and many of the sketches here owe themselves to that view—like "The Interrupter," a delightful piece about a blue-tit and a Siamese cat, or "The Dance." But others, like "A Small Parcel," a happy piece of writing about the arrival of a food packet from America in 1947, or "Great Characters," a warm appreciation of a book of prose-portraits, or "How to Use a Prism," might have been written anywhere. There are essays of travel, like "The Queen of Europe" and "Barcarolle," and more literary essays, like "Walter Raymond." Yet the book hangs together, has a continuity and cohesion of its own and takes the reader into its quiet and thoughtful world. It would be difficult to imagine a country-dweller who would not feel that it enlarged his zest and scope, his understanding of the scenes about him.

LASTLY, a very good thriller, *Alias Basil Willing*, by Helen McCloy. This has an opening gambit as intriguing as any I can remember. The detective, Dr. Basil Willing, criminal psychologist employed in the District Attorney's office, is so struck by the eccentric behaviour of a fellow-customer in a tobacconist's shop that he follows him into the street and hears him giving instructions to a taxi-driver to call for him at a certain address. "What name?" asks the taxi-driver. "I am Dr. Basil Willing," says the man. From that moment the hunt is on and the reader's attention securely held. A couple of murders follow fairly swiftly, and an attempted murder livens up the investigation when it threatens to grow monotonous. There is no great mystery about the source of these, even the executants are not very difficult to pick out, but Miss McCloy depends on the motive and certain bizarre circumstances connected with the crimes to perplex and harrow her readers. The solution, when it comes, is a good one and has not been used to my knowledge for some eighty years, and then by an unexpected writer to whom full tribute is paid. It will not, I think, deprive any reader of his suspense if I say that the clue to this mystery lies in a certain short story by Charles Dickens. A neat piece of puzzle-invention.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

TERESA OF AVILA.
By Kate O'Brien. (*Max Parrish; 7s. 6d.*)

This is a modest book about a modest but very great woman, a Saint who was also a writer of genius, an organiser, a reformer and a fearless fighter for her cause. Miss O'Brien's study is one of a series of Personal Portraits and so tries to be no more than a sincere and economically written tribute. But if it introduces the personality of this most interesting woman of the Spanish sixteenth century to English readers who know only her writings, it will have been very much worth while.

NO TIME FOR BREAKFAST.
By John Deane Potter. (*Melrose; 16s.*)

The title is no more than just for this breathless, round-the-world record of a journalist. Mr. Potter tells his story as though it had to be read in a hurry, but his perception is lively, his sympathy quick, his style pithy. A strong recommendation.

FRESH WOODS.
By Ian Niall. (*Heinemann; 10s. 6d.*)

Nature and nostalgia; as beautifully written, illustrated and produced as this author's *Poacher's Handbook*.

THE DISCOVERY OF L. S. LOWRY.
By Maurice Collis. (*Reid and Lefevre; 25s.*)

The very curious story of a painter's sudden recognition after long neglect, illustrated with some twenty-four plates, four of them in colour.

THE ART OF SEEING ART.
By Matteo Marangoni. (*Shelley Castle; 36s.*)

Perhaps the most valuable "eye-glass book" on art yet to have appeared.

HIS EXCELLENCY.
By Adrian Alington. (*Chatto and Windus; 11s. 6d.*)

A novel successfully made from the play.

THE GOLDEN DAGGER.
By E. R. Punshon. (*Gollancz; 9s. 6d.*)

A new "Bobby Owen" mystery as sound and exciting as ever.

WHITAKER'S ALMANAC, 1952.
(*J. Whitaker and Sons, Ltd. Complete Edition; 15s.*)

The largest, fullest edition ever published, with a 32-page Election Supplement. A whole, indispensable reference library in one volume.

LINDY LOO

by Grace Wheatley, A.R.W.S.

"They tell me we're going to wear them straight this year."

MR. BARRY LUPINO AND MR. ARTY ASH, authors of *Cinderella* at the Princes Theatre this season.

MISS EVE BRADFIELD, writer and producer of *Puss in Boots on Ice* at the Empress Hall.

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

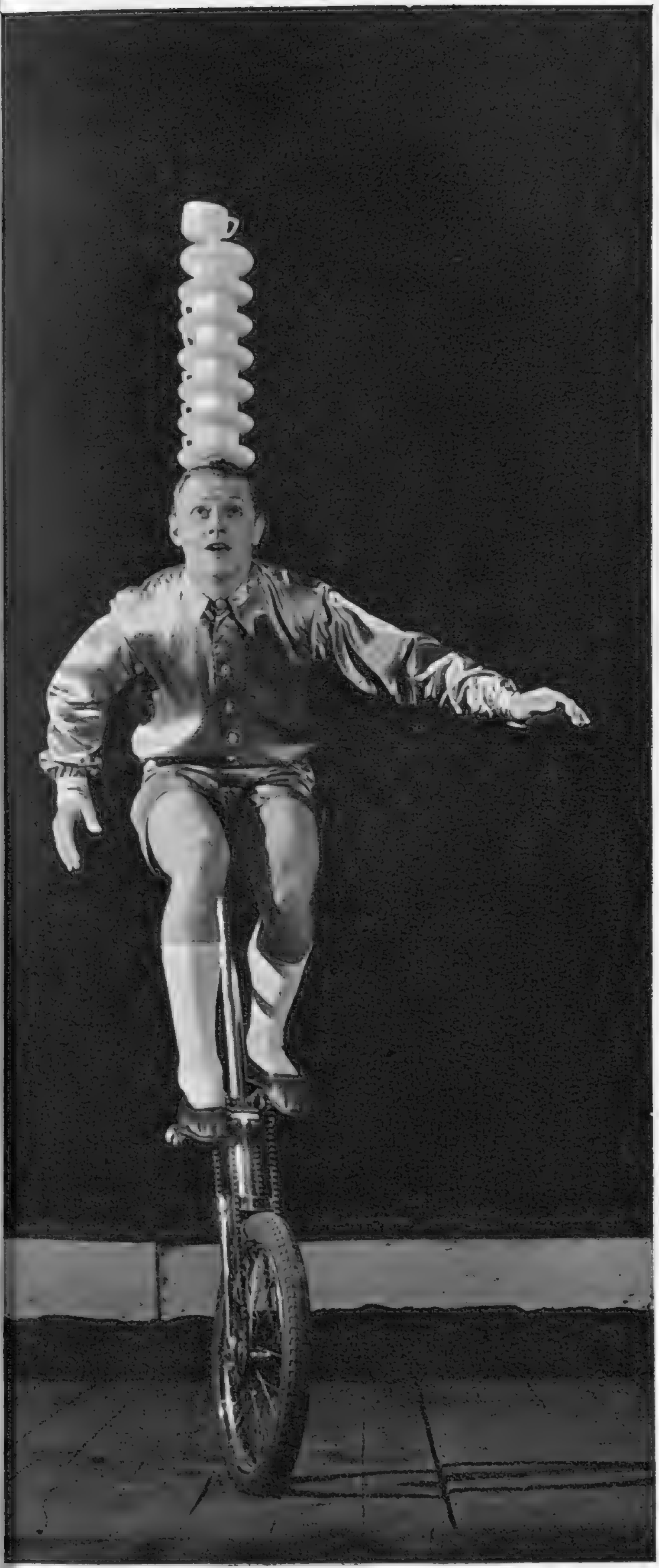
being our reply to a *cri de coeur* by a Fourth Leader-writer in *The Times* . . .

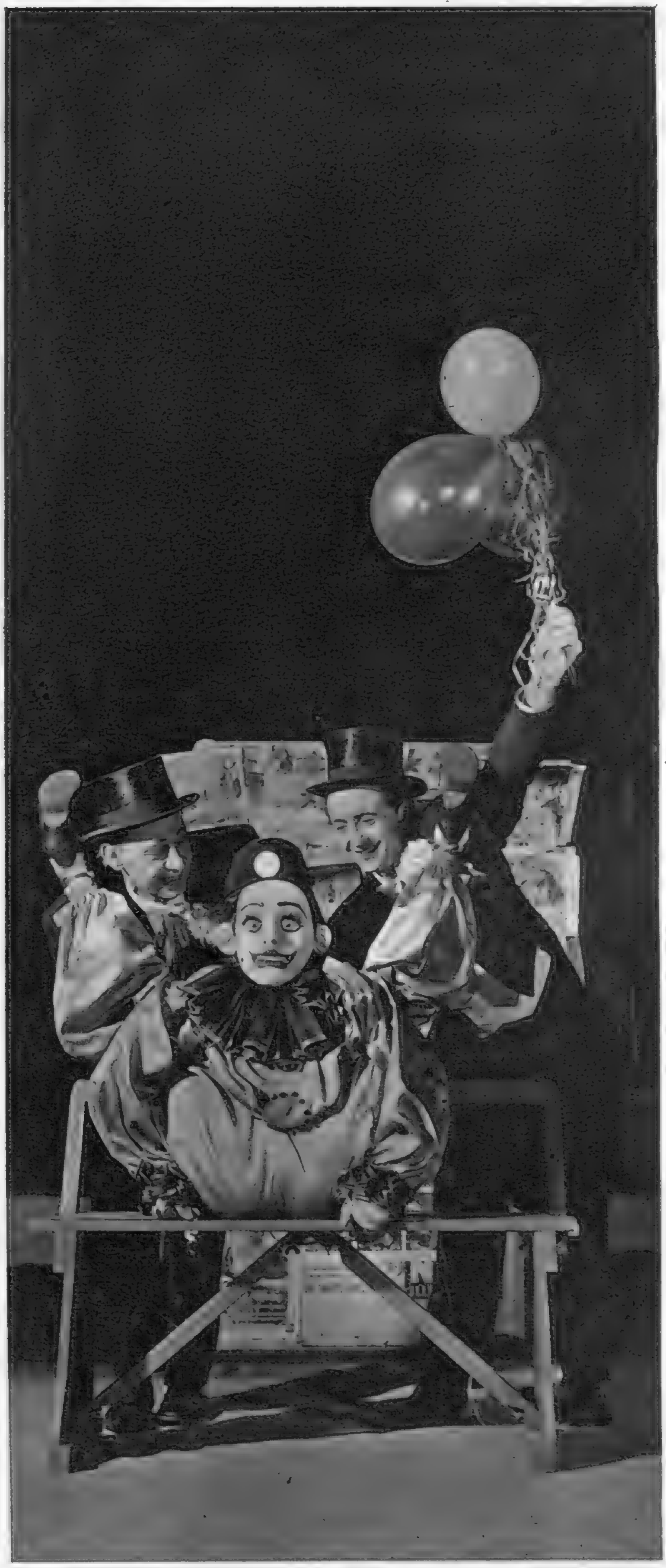
. . . who recently complained—and with justice—of the anonymity of pantomime authors, who give so much pleasure to so many. We agree and offer the Leader-writer—himself obliged to hide his cheerful light under a permanent bushel—the portraits of eight authors of currently-running pantomimes, whom we persuaded to take a personal curtain call for this page of *The Sketch*.

MR. BASIL THOMAS AND MISS BARBARA GORDON, joint authors of *Humpty Dumpty* at the Palladium.

MR. GERALD PALMER AND MR. STANLEY LLOYD wrote *Robinson Crusoe on Ice*, now playing at the Empire Pool.

MR. EMILE LITTLER, the famous impresario, wrote and produced *Aladdin* at the Casino.





CIRCUS SENSATIONS

None of it done by mirrors, hypnotism or any other credible means, but all sheer, startling skill. On the left is Rudy Horn, who, balanced as you see, catches on his right toe a saucer thrown by his partner and kicks it on to his head ; next he fields a cup in the same way : click ! into the saucer. At this point the audience is ready to applaud eagerly a completed act, but on he goes until there are seven cups and saucers making a graceful column on his head. Still not through, he adds a spoon and lump of sugar to the top cup. On the right is the Allegro Trio : two merry chaps coming back from a party and using up their high spirits on a dummy. They fling it around and twist it about into every impossible position (not much sawdust in it, poor old thing, the spectator feels), wind its legs as if they were the starting handles of a car, and, finally, having tied it up in a compact bundle, throw it into a dustbin. It is all very gay and amusing, and while the audience is laughing happily, out of the bin steps the dummy, unmasked : a real (still !) live girl.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO . . .

PETER USTINOV, who, as Nero, "burned" Rome for *Quo Vadis* while writing *The Love of Four Colonels*.
Mr. Ustinov always seems to put everything he has into any character he plays, which must have made it extra difficult to write a popular play while portraying that notorious fiddler Nero. *The Love of Four Colonels* is still running very successfully. *Quo Vadis* opens on January 25.

ANNETTE CLARKE, for apparently making both ends meet.
Magician Robert Harbin saws this serene-looking young woman in half every day during Maskelyne and Devant's holiday season at the Westminster Theatre. She is a Londoner ; Harbin comes from South Africa.

DONALD HOUSTON, for upholding Britain's legendary traditions.
Unarmed, Mr. Houston, as St. George, got his dragon all the same. At a performance of *Where the Rainbow Ends*, his sword was knocked out of his hand into the orchestra pit in the middle of the fight with the dragon. Resourceful St. George leapt on to the dragon and snatched its sword, with which he ended the battle in the traditional way.

MR. DAVID ECCLES, Minister of Works, for being chosen by tailors as the best-dressed British politician.
A tailors' trade journal has not chosen Mr. Eccles lightly ; it adds that the Cabinet as a whole is the best dressed we have had for a long time. Mr. Eccles suspects that the tailors are plotting to make him buy another suit ; adds that they are so rich that they all have Television sets with which to spy on him : the Television Eye is certainly an alarming auxiliary of the Public Eye.

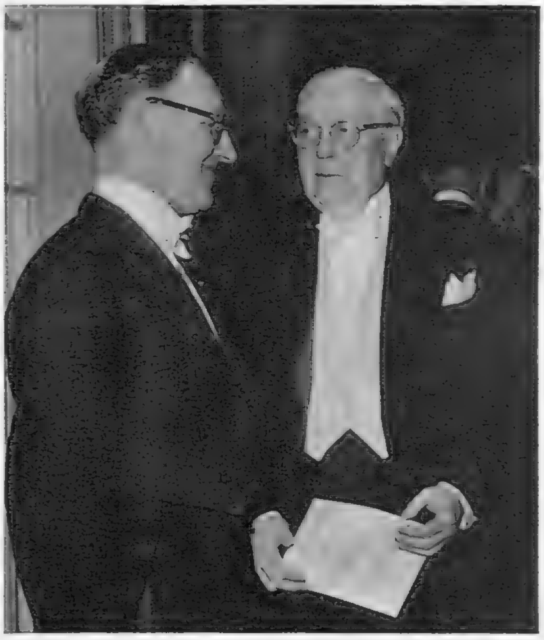
Mr. T. H. Blackham, Chairman of the Association, Mr. E. B. Ferguson, Chairman of the British Insurance Association, and Mr. C. H. Johnson, Deputy Chairman of the L.U.A., anticipating a pleasant evening.

Mr. Carl Briner, President of the International Union of Marine Insurance, Zurich ; Mr. R. A. J. Porter, Chairman of Lloyds Underwriters' Association ; Mr. A. W. Theobald, Chairman of the Institute of London Underwriters ; Mr. H. J. Quirino da Fonseca, Chairman Gremio dos Seguradores, Portugal.

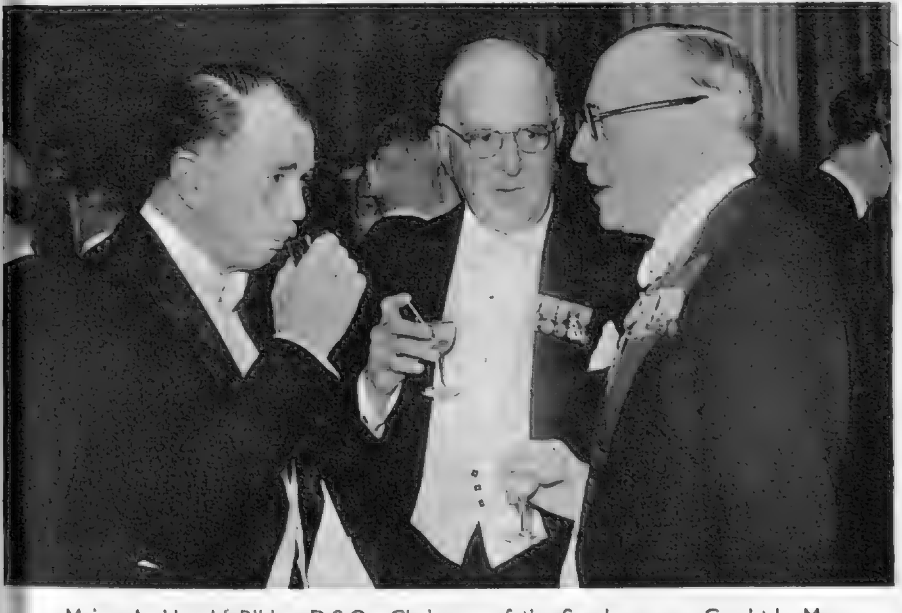
ANNIVERSARY BANQUET IN LIVERPOOL

The Liverpool Underwriters' Association celebrated their 150th anniversary with a banquet in the Derby Room at the Adelphi Hotel on Tuesday of last week (January 8). The Home Secretary, Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, was guest of honour and there were many other distinguished guests, some of whom are here enjoying talk, aperitifs and cigarettes. Decorations were worn, and there were representatives of big insurance firms from the United States, France, Italy, Portugal and Switzerland. Unfortunately, Lord Derby, who was to have proposed the toast of "The City," had influenza and was confined to Knowsley Hall.

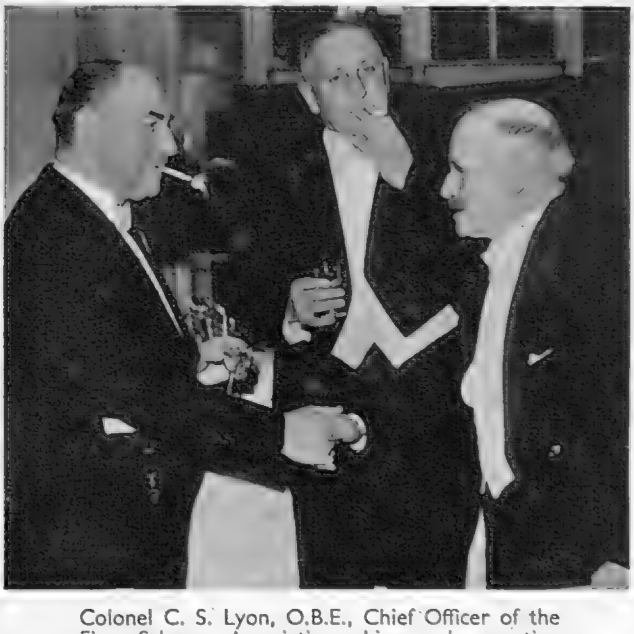
The Lord Bishop of Liverpool and Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, who was the guest of honour.



Mr. T. H. Blackham and Mr. Owen C. Torrey, President of the American Marine Underwriters, New York.



Major A. Harold Bibby, D.S.O., Chairman of the Sea Insurance Co. Ltd., Mr. Duncan T. Norman, M.C., J.P., Director of the Reliance Marine Insurance Co. Ltd., Lieut.-Colonel A. Buckley, C.B.E., another Director of the same company.



Colonel C. S. Lyon, O.B.E., Chief Officer of the Fire Salvage Association, Liverpool, greeting Mr. A. M. Finlason.

Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Sire De Maletroit's Door* (adapted by Winston Clewes) was the occasion of that rare thing—a poor performance by Alan Wheatley (centre). With him here are Josephine Griffin and Robin Lloyd.

Those who know, say that puppetry is booming in this country. Much of this popularity is due to the excellent puppet shows in the Children's Programme. Here the *Parvo Puppets* are seen in *A Christmas Fantasy.*

Milestones, by Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblock, tells of a family through three generations. Here are the three principal characters, getting somewhat long in the tooth. (L. to r.) Michael Denison, Dulcie Gray and Mary Mackenzie.

TALKING OF TELEVISION

By Cyril Butcher

HAD we been the lean and slippered type of pantaloon, we would doubtlessly have seen the New Year in, gazing rheumily at our television set, deep in our favourite armchair by the fire, with a steaming rum toddy at our side and our cats, *Oscar* and *Johann* (Strauss), on our lap, crushing us to insensibility by their combined weight. In point of fact, we spent the occasion at a very noisy party.

But that does not stop us from indulging in the seasonable habit of reviewing the Old Year—in the light of cold sobriety. What sort of television year was 1951? If we had to make an award for an outstanding personal achievement, whom would we choose? It is not easy to decide.

If one were trapped into a snap judgment, the verdict might easily be that the year represented a slow, slogging progress. For there is no doubt that the overall standard of the programmes is higher than at this time twelve months ago. Yet several important developments have taken place during that time. The Lime Grove studios have gone into full production, the Children's Programme has become an important feature, the Holme Moss transmitter has gathered a vast new audience in the North, and the scope of outside broadcast has widened enormously, drawing even hitherto competing entertainments into its net. The viewer of to-day certainly gets value for his £2 licence fee.

As for awarding an Oscar, that would indeed be a difficult task. Much easier if one could award a half-dozen or so. Richard Dimbleby has continued his good work, notably in such programmes as *London Town* and his weekly news review. Then Cecil Madden's pioneer work with the Children's Programme should not be forgotten. Nor should Lance Sieveking's bold experiment with *A Tomb With a View.* And the producers—nearly all of them—have shown flashes of genius. Eric Fawcett's handling of *Counsellor At Law* and Michael Mills's monumental effort with *The Passing Show* spring to mind, as do the unflagging experimental work of Christian Simpson and the practical imaginativeness of Michael Barry, whose career as author-producer wound up so triumphantly with *Shout Aloud Salvation* (with Charles Terrot) before he became responsible for the whole drama department. Turning to the actors, we find the standard bewilderingly high. Dozens of the performances we have described as "superb" or "brilliant"—and we meant what we said. Nancy Price, Sonia Dresdel, Margaret Leighton, Barbara Couper, Barbara Kelly, Alan Wheatley, Robert Beatty, John Robinson, Ray Jackson, Clement McCallin, Patrick Barr; the list is a random one and should contain many more names. We remember their work with pleasure.

But it was not a year of unalloyed triumph. As it declined into winter the programmes followed suit and our job became a very dreary one. It was heartrending not to be able to refute the comment of others, that "British television is terrible." Things got a little better over Christmas, and well they might.

Christmas Day was a busy one. The early evening found us quite enchanted with an adaptation of Hans Andersen's *The Princess and the Swineherd*, by Nicholas Stuart Gray, in the Children's Programme. That mood left us temporarily during the self-conscious gaiety of the all-star *Christmas Party*, in which we could have done with more of Ethel Revnell and Norman Wisdom, and a great deal less of some of the other "guests." However, we cheered up again later when Fred O'Donovan produced J. B. Priestley's *When We Are Married*, with a delightfully rumbustious performance by Frank Pettingell.

On Boxing Day there was a pantomime—*Aladdin*—ostensibly for children of all ages. It was *not* very good; it would have been totally intolerable had it not been for the gentle clowning of Peter Butterworth as Widow Twankey and David Nixon as Wishee Washee, who proved once again that pathos is the essence of comedy.

But our greatest seasonable enjoyment came from two outside broadcasts: *Puss In Boots On Ice*, from the Empress Hall (which is really a magnificent show), and the Bertram Mills' *Silver Jubilee Circus* from Olympia. Those *were* something.

THE BIRD WOMAN OF DITCHLING

BIRDS are as fond of Miss Len Howard as she is of them ; they are her friends, and in her book, *Birds as Individuals* (Collins ; 10s. 6d.), published last week, she introduces some of them to us. They are delightful company, with an astonishing range of character and emotion : "instinct" is a quite inadequate word to explain their behaviour.

The Great Tits are among the most interesting. Miss Howard gives a genealogical tree of four generations of these and some delightful chapters describing their very individual characters. Mates remain faithful to each other until death : family feeling among brothers and sisters continues after leaving the nest ; there are friendships, feuds, and "triangle" dramas ; hectic competition for favourite nesting-places ; pairs without broods of their own adopt families ; there are nervous and self-conscious types, confident and clever ones ; all are habitués of Miss Howard's home, "Bird Cottage," where she feeds and helps them, and proves their intelligence in many conclusive ways.

Their methods of communicating with her are most interesting ; there is no doubt that she has established an intimacy with them which enables her to introduce us to their world—"another" world, but astonishingly like our own, except that it is rather saner ! Work, play, art (bird music is a highly-developed art), love, hate, consideration, ingenuity : the expression "almost human" could well be replaced by "almost bird-like."

Top : Miss Len Howard with one of her Great Tit friends. She has names for them all ; knows their relationships and problems.

Above : The model is also a critic.

Right : Having accepted Miss Howard, her friends also accept her machine—and as much of her cheese ration as they can get hold of.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

as Campbell Dixon sees him

Tennessee Williams' play, "Summer and Smoke," illustrated on the opposite page, is due for transfer to the West End next week. (Our Theatre Critic's review appeared on December 5.) Showing simultaneously in a few weeks' time will be the film version of his "A Streetcar Named Desire," starring Vivien Leigh—an interesting comparison for theatregoers who saw the stage version last summer.

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS—given a name like that, poetic and picturesque, you know exactly what to expect: a tall, thin, gangling man, slow-moving, slow-speaking, with a mind coloured by rotting plantations and the decadence of Tobacco Road; a product of generations of Anglo-Saxon dissipation and puritanism (these go hand-in-hand in the South, which is fortunate, as you will see, for Mr. Williams); a modern Abe Lincoln, with a Dixie drawl, an old-world courtesy and a poet's vision.

All generalisations are false, they say—including this one. Mr. Williams is neither tall nor short, neither fat nor lean; and if he gangles, then I don't know what gangling means. But he does speak slowly with a Southern accent; the South, with its beauty and poverty, its decadent grace and desperate clinging to a dying tradition, has left a marked impact on his mind; and, like most Southerners, he has charming manners. Some representatives of the English county may cultivate a modern brusquerie. South of the Mason-and-Dixon line you are still in the eighteenth century. Yeah, ma'am.

Tennessee Williams, at thirty-seven, is already the most discussed playwright in America. Soon, no doubt, he will become a legend and Hollywood will make a film about him, faithful but not pedantic, like the films about famous composers and crooners and outlaws. Before that happens, let's get in early with the facts. In some cases biography isn't tremendously important: with Tennessee Williams it's the key that unlocks his mind. His plays and characters are usually called neurotic. "Maybe," he says calmly, "that's because I'm neurotic myself." Psychologists tell us that fear and insecurity are at the bottom of most neuroses, but, of course, it's not every neurotic who can make insecurity pay a dividend estimated, in the case of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, at £500,000.

First, then, the facts. His name is not Tennessee. He was baptised Thomas Lanier Williams. At the University of Missouri his fellow students nicknamed him Tennessee because of his accent; it happened that his ancestors were among the first colonists of Tennessee; he liked the name and he stuck to it. His family is a mixture of Welsh, Scots, Irish and French—all Celtic. Perhaps that in itself conduces to a little neuroticism! After leaving college he was clerk, waiter, cinema usher, "a cowboy on a pigeon ranch," and hobo. At sixteen he had had a story published in *Weird Tales*, which even among pulp magazines is not distinguished, and while doing odd jobs for a crust he started writing plays. For years he got nowhere with them. Only six years ago he was earning £4 a week as an usher at a New York theatre just around the corner from the Barrymore where *A Streetcar Named Desire* was to earn him £150,000—not to mention film and touring rights. Still the literary hobo, he had a shot at Hollywood, but his scripts were not much thought of by the big boys, who would now pay £2000 a week to have him back. Then came *The Glass Menagerie* and the *Streetcar*; the rest is history.

Rags to riches, local boy makes good—it's an old story except for one important detail. Most American success stories are based on optimism, slick salesmanship, the good old build-up: *Be strong—Increase Your Height Six Inches Secretly—Cultivate the Executive Personality—For a nominal down payment Professor Rosenkranz's inspiring work. . . .* The more successful plays, from *It Pays to Advertise* to *You Can't Take It with You* and *Harvey*, have used one of two eupeptic approaches: *YOU* can win friends, influence people, be a success, increase your financial stature; or, if you can't, what the hell? Millionaires pay taxes, have dyspepsia. Hobos never care what they eat, or if they eat. What's the good of money, anyway? No pockets in a shroud.

Tennessee Williams is almost unique (we mustn't forget Arthur Miller) in basing a tremendous success on failure. He doesn't build his characters up—he tears them down. Poor lame little Cinderella in *The Glass Menagerie*—no Prince Charming for her. And Blanche Dubois, the faded nymphomaniac—no, we mustn't call her that, protests her creator—the flibbertygibbet of *Streetcar*, with her pathetic clinging to gentility, her desperate anxiety to cover her past and find a husband—she has her mask torn ruthlessly from her haggard face, she is derided and raped and shattered, and led off, ogling the doctor, to an asylum.

"They call me a pessimist on £1000 a week," says Mr. Williams. "That phrase contains two mis-statements. I'm not a pessimist, but I am worried—who isn't?—about the human situation. In our Southern States, particularly, there is a deep neuroticism, the result of conflict between Puritanism and our natural impulses. And that is true of most parts of the world just now. Science has given us great power; there never was greater occasion to spread our wings and take off into the empyrean. But fear and distrust seem to be the albatross around our necks: the world is feverish and frenetic. Is it pessimistic to face this? If we stop believing in the certainty of war, if we remember that science also gives us the power to know ourselves, to pull ourselves out of our complacency, I believe there is still hope for mankind."

All of which suggests that if he doesn't quite share the abysmal gloom of a Eugene O'Neill, Mr. Williams's optimism is restrained. Why shouldn't it be, asks the cynic—himself a neurotic, probably—when neuroses and poverty, madness and death pay such handsome dividends? Why bother with dull, happy people in a normal home when millions will flock to see neurotics do a spiritual striptease in a slummy little flat with usual offices—seen on floors above? *The Rose Tattoo*, Mr. Williams tells me, will show him in a happier light. In Italy, where his Mrs. Stone spent a Roman spring with a titled gigolo, Mr. Williams finds none of the neuroticism of his homeland—just a happy, natural, smiling people responding to life unself-consciously, like the gentleman (the titled gigolo's prospective successor) who follows Mrs. Stone in the street, making obscene gestures.

Well, that's the spirit. Uninhibited. Though the gesture-maker isn't a playwright of genius, he, too, makes self-expression pay. Some people have a gift that way.

Alma and John, rector's daughter and doctor's son, have been friends since childhood. Alma has developed a soulful love for John, but he is aggressively materialistic.

John is given to wild parties ; Rosa is his ally. John's father, Dr. Buchanan (centre), is killed as a result of trying to interfere. The sottish sleeper is Papa Gonzales.

ATMOSPHERICS

The title *Summer and Smoke* conveys the atmosphere of this play by the American dramatist of intangibles, Tennessee Williams. It is due at the Duchess Theatre next Wednesday (Jan. 23) after a two-months run at the Lyric, Hammersmith. In the photographs are Margaret Johnston (Alma), William Sylvester (John), Wensley Pithey (Dr. Buchanan), Reginald Dyson (Papa Gonzales), Ingeborg Wells (Rosa), Sheila Shand Gibbs (Nellie Ewell) and Harry Tomb (Mr. Kramer). The play is directed by Peter Glenville.

On the left, John is with Alma, whose spiritual love he rejects ; on the right with Rosa, his partner in dissolution and cause of his father's death, as a result of which John reforms.

John, having discovered his soul for himself, without Alma's help, turns, not to her, but to a piano pupil of hers, Nellie Ewell, to whom he becomes engaged.

The situation is reversed ; now it is Alma, hurt and frustrated, who is going downhill. She becomes a prostitute, and is picked up by a travelling salesman, at the fountain where she used to meet, and dream about, John

TALES WITH A STING

TRIPLE SEC.

By R. D. Faull

THE three Frenchmen seated at the bar possessed a common air of preoccupation. The eldest sat chewing his lower lip without much appetite and was obviously extremely bored. Next to him was an arrogantly male young man, whose whole attitude expressed the controlled expectancy of the confident lover. His mind was clearly divided between anticipation and recollection, and at intervals he stroked his face intimately with someone else's fingertips. In contrast, the third member of the group had an air of marked effeminacy and there was about him that aura of lustrous blankness with which the pearl must of necessity regard the swine amongst whom it has fallen.

"To wait for one's wife," said the large man, "is unbelievably tedious, and the tedium is increased by the knowledge that she will eventually arrive." This depressing seed of conversation fell, however, on fruitful ground and the virile young man moved the crossbeam of his shoulders in deprecation.

"Sympathy with your feelings, Monsieur," he replied, "cannot lessen my own rapture." He paused and heaved a sigh which would have been more truly poetical had it been less obviously athletic.

"I await my mistress," he said, in a voice in which pride in past achievement and the prospect of future bliss were nicely blended.

"All else beside the mind in woman is disruption," said the exquisite youth beside him. "I myself await a Platonic friend."

The husband merely looked sour, but the lover appeared inexpressibly shocked. "*Alors*, she is perhaps a Professor of Philosophy, your Platonic friend?" he asked tentatively.

"By no means," replied the dreamer, "she is a woman whom many men find beautiful in the extreme."

The lover strove vainly to attune his principles to this paradox. "How," he demanded, "do you forget her beauty long enough to consider her mind?"

The answer came back with impressive finality: "I only consider her mind."

"Women," remarked the husband, "have no minds and their beauty is a figment of the youthful imagination. My wife," he added, "is an intemperate and extravagant shrew."

The lover was bewildered by such violent cynicism. "Is your wife unbearably ugly?" he asked.

"To those for whose overdrafts she is not responsible," retorted the husband with heavy humour, "it is apparent that she is not without allure.". His eye rested with a knowledgeable and disillusioned certainty on the lover's face. "*Sans doute*," he continued, "you yourself would join the concourse of those who approach her with beautiful flowers and unbeautiful thoughts."

"I love one woman alone," returned the other with dignity.

"In that case, if you are unmarried, you should be able to effect a small saving each year," commented the husband with the nearest approach to approval he had yet shown, "especially if the lady concerned is herself married," he added.

The lover looked as melancholy as his vitality allowed. "She is terribly unhappy," he murmured. "She married a tyrant who treats her with formidable cruelty. He is a veritable Attila."

"Yet," said the husband, "I have no doubt that she is both elegant and *soignee* and that the charm of her figure is not inconsistent with the eating of regular meals."

"*D'accord*."

"*Et puis alors*, I am confident," continued the other, "that this husband, this monster of cruelty, is responsible for all the material aspects of her divinity. It appears to me that you are not sufficiently grateful to him, for you have the pleasure of loving her, while he has the expense of maintaining her. *En effet*, you have the best of both worlds in that you have achieved emotional gratification without economic embarrassment, which to my mind is a matter of no small consequence to one making his way in a competitive age." Upon this lofty note, he retired into a Keynesian meditation from which the lover did not care to recall him.

The exquisite friend eyed the husband with revulsion and said: "You are a Marxist, your economic notions of women disgust me, and as for you," he swivelled his philosophic stare to the lover, "you are a Freudian symptom." The husband shrugged his shoulders, but the lover's face betrayed only gratitude for the compliment.

Silence fell again on the three and they returned to the contemplation of their glasses; the husband resumed his cloak of boredom, the friend reascended his ivory tower, and the lover relapsed once more into his reprehensible imaginings.

After some minutes the door behind them opened and a woman came in. She moved with a fluent grace and she was undoubtedly beautiful. When she saw them, she stopped, raised her elegant eyebrows and waited patiently for their attention. The lover, lifting his head to study himself in the mirror, saw her first, and at his ecstatic greeting the other two came back to life. When they saw what he had seen they also expressed signs of recognition, until with a sudden shock they realised the truth, and then they looked at the single object of their variegated affections with a speechless horror.

She regarded them with amusement and a faint mockery, and bowed towards them in turn. "*Mon mari, mon amour, mon ami*," she said: "I have gathered you here to inform you severally and collectively that I am leaving you. I wonder I have not arrived at this decision earlier, for you are all unsatisfactory to me in your different ways. You, my husband, have never been my friend, which is unfortunate; you, my lover, have always wished to be my husband, which is ungrateful, and you, my friend, have always been content to be my friend, which is gratuitously offensive."

After a long moment of pregnant silence the three men gave way to their emotions.

"You are unfaithful," shouted the husband, all financial considerations forgotten.

"You have been bodily concerned with a man," cried the friend with revulsion.

"You are an intellectual," said the lover incredulously.

The barman, whose face bore the tired, intelligent look of the eternal spectator, had been considering them for some time with comprehending attention, and he now spoke with an authority and a sensibility worthy of the Quai d'Orsay.

"Madame," he said, "is perhaps all of these things, and yet she is certainly more than these things. She is, if I may be permitted to say so, rather like a cocktail, of which you, *messieurs*, reflect certain of the component parts. Nevertheless you, as constituents, do not create the whole. If you will permit it, I will illustrate my thesis by composing such a cocktail before your eyes."

He bowed to them and selected three bottles from the bar. "Now," he said, "brandy for the husband, champagne for the lover and," he paused, "a dash of bitters for the friend."

He set the shaker on the bar and looked at them gravely. "It still lacks the quality that is inexplicable, the strange *je ne sais quoi* that is essentially woman, the heart of mystery."

He gazed at his bottles, then nodded and vanished under the counter with the shaker, to reappear after a few moments. "Now," he said, "it is complete, I shall call it 'Madame.'" He shook it with the smoothness of infinite practice, set up three glasses and poured a measure into each. "Now, Messieurs," he murmured, "drink and see if you can comprehend the final ingredient."

The three picked up their glasses, looked suspiciously at the barman and took a cautious sip. Their eyebrows rose pleasurably in unanimous accord, and then frowns of concentration appeared on each forehead.

"Benedictine," said the husband.

"Cherry brandy," said the lover.

"Three drops of Cointreau," said the friend.

The barman shook his head. "Madame is right to leave you," he said sympathetically, "for none of you understands her. You are all lacking in essential perception and you would do well to prolong the pain of your departure no further."

The three drew themselves up, looked savagely at each other, gazed broodingly and reproachfully at the versatile pulchritude before them, and with a unanimous air of well-sustained dignity turned and left the bar.

Madame seated herself gracefully and surveyed the barman with her wholly sophisticated eyes.

"Was it water you put in the cocktail?" she asked.

The barman smiled and looked at her with gentle appreciation. "*Oui*, Madame, one simple drop of water."

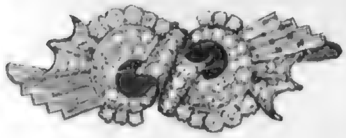
"That is not very flattering to the heart of mystery," she said.

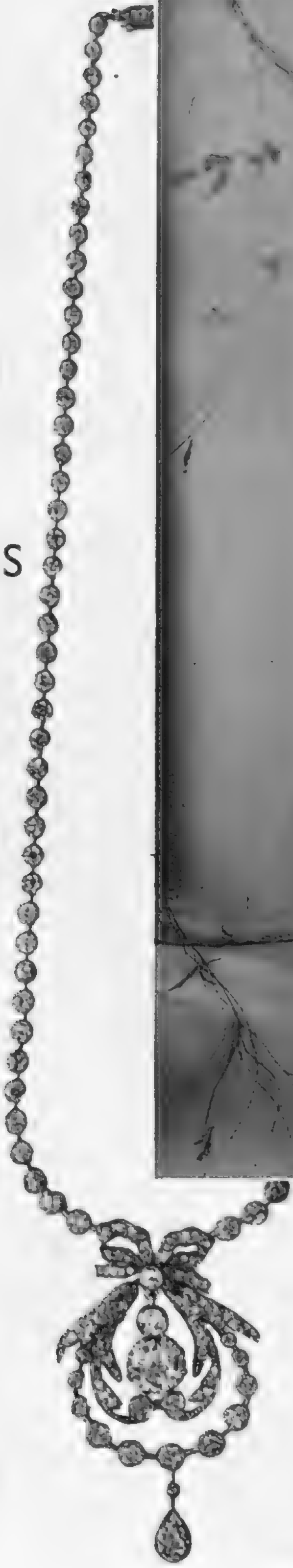
"Ah," replied the barman, "the value of mystery lies not in its solution but only in its mysteriousness."

"You are a very knowledgeable barman."

"Madame is a very beautiful woman"—he bowed slightly towards her—"and Madame can do something in life that I can only do behind the bar, and that is to persuade men they are drinking three different liqueurs when, in fact, they are drinking none."

His eye was full of a tolerant cynicism and his eyes were kind as they rested on her. "And is it not the secret of women, Madame," he murmured, "that they alone can successfully charge corkage on drinking water?"





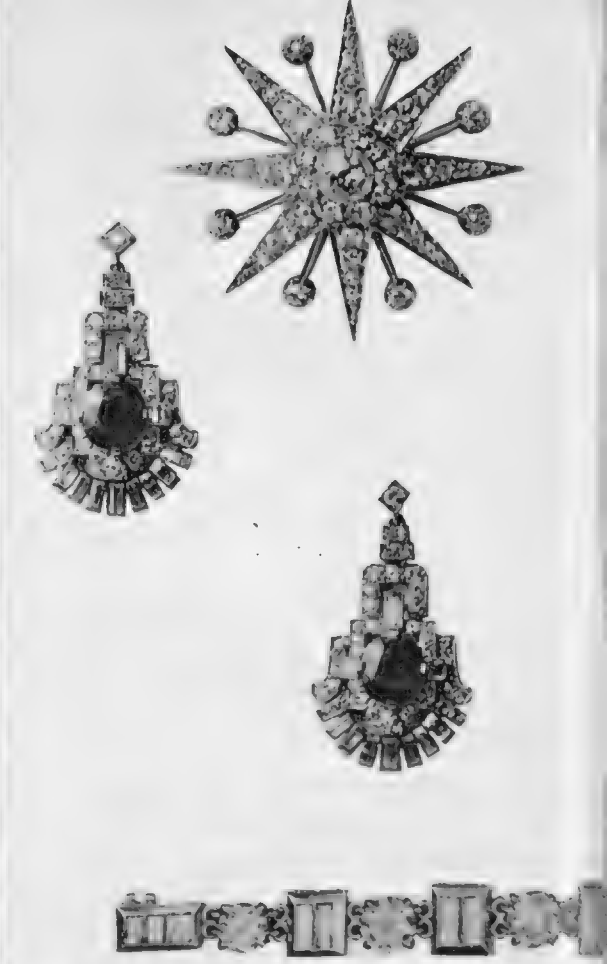
GARNISH WITH DIAMONDS

A ball dress in peach-coloured tulle, layer upon layer ; the bodice is tucked and encrusted with jewel embroidery. By Roecliff and Chapman at Peter Jones ; Ella Stewart, Edinburgh. The fine diamond collet-set necklace has a delicately designed pendant of crescents and pear-shaped diamond beneath a lovers' knot. The brooch (above) is finely worked in diamonds and baguettes. Both from Mappin and Webb.

The girl who really adores dancing will know how much difference her dress can make. You may take the floor in a night-club wearing a narrow skirt and shuffle round happily enough, but no matter how many overskirts and panniers it may have, the same dress will not do for a fast Viennese waltz.

A fairy-tale dress for the most formal evening occasions should be full length, with a swirling skirt of tulle, silk chiffon or organza ; the bodice secure and comfortable with " bones " which do their job without argument with your ribs. It may be strapless, but newer (and safer) is the halter neck. Many of the new styles have minute jackets of the same flimsy material embroidered with paillettes or tiny beads. Colours : steel-grey, steel-blue, peach and brown. White, no longer the monopoly of the déb, is becoming as sophisticated as black. And having made your choice—garnish lavishly with diamonds.

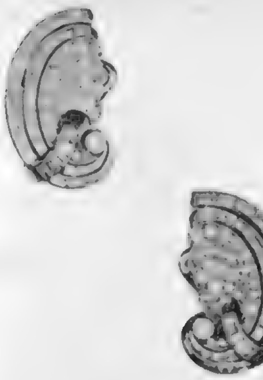
by Elizabeth Penrose



Yards of white net and lace make this full-skirted ball dress by Roecliff and Chapman. Scarlet cabbage roses spray over the shoulder. From Hunts of Bond Street ; Marshall and Snelgrove, Sheffield.

(*Left.*) A superb piece by Hunt and Roskell—the diamond centre is platinum mounted and detaches from the "snake" chain to form dress clips.

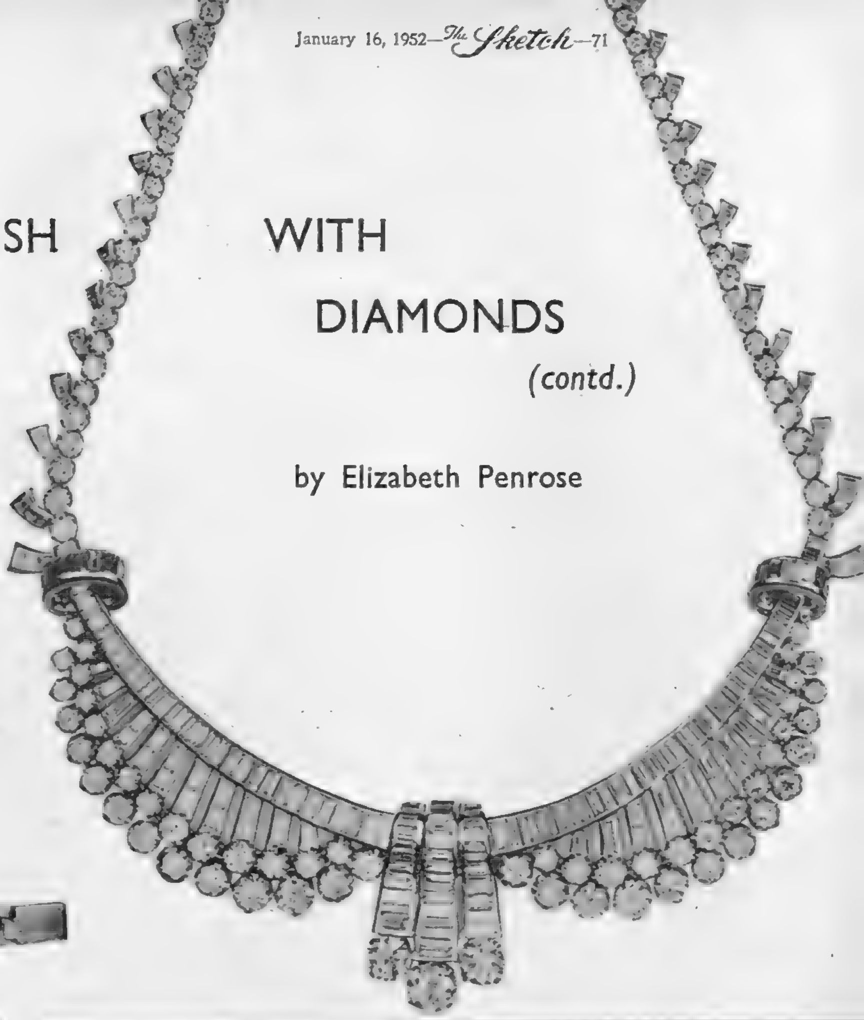
Susan Small's youthful ball dress of white shirred marquisette. There is a brief, long-sleeved bolero of navy-blue embroidered net (not shown) to match the godets on the skirt and the band on the boned bodice. At Selfridges ; Brown's of Chester.



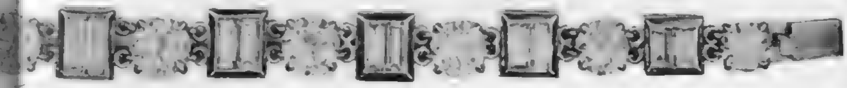
GARNISH WITH DIAMONDS

(contd.)

by Elizabeth Penrose



The white metals, platinum, palladium and white gold, are being used extensively for the settings of evening jewels. (Gold is reserved for daytime wear.) Diamonds set in platinum give an all-white brilliance which is matchless in the ballroom. *Far left*: Pendant sapphire and diamond ear-rings, delicate in workmanship though impressive in size, are platinum-set. Baguette-diamonds form a crescent beneath the centre stone. The large diamond star brooch has radiating stems, each studded with individual collet-set brilliants. A practical note: the brooch fitting is removable and there is a loop for use as a pendant. Both pieces from Hunt and Roskell. The newest ear-rings climb the edge of the ear. The ones *above*, shaped like little shells, consist of brilliant cut and baton diamonds set in platinum. The necklace to match has the magnificence, the feeling of movement, the size-without-weight quality which is characteristic of contemporary jewellery. *Below*: A bracelet of severe simplicity and charm. Double baton diamonds are linked alternately with brilliant cut diamonds set in platinum. All from The Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company.



A perfect dress for jewels—Marvid's pure silk black chiffon over a flame-coloured taffeta slip. The bodice is black and flame shot velvet, striped with gold. About 28 guineas from Margaret Marks of Knightsbridge; Cripps of Liverpool.

Brenner's full swirling dress of midnight-blue tulle banded with glittering sequin embroidery. There is a little cap-sleeved jacket to match of minutely chevron-tucked blue tulle. About £36 from Harrods; Samuels of Manchester.

For the Slender Purse . . . recommended by Elizabeth Penrose

The voluminous "tent" is becoming a fashion of the past, and the fitted, flared, classic redingote you will be wearing this spring is the swing-away which was bound to come. Dior's new Princesse line—bodice clinging to the ribs, waist not as high as it appears to be—is the inspiration behind it. One of the most charming versions of the new shape is Crayson's immensely smart, youthful daytime coat above. The fabric is a fine worsted suiting, navy with white, or black with white. The collar is velvet; the pockets and twelve little boot buttons are placed to minimise the waist. Price £11 18s. from Bentalls of Kingston; John Barker of Kensington; Bourne and Hollingsworth of Oxford Street; Parrish of Newcastle; Biggers of Glasgow; J. Jones of Manchester.

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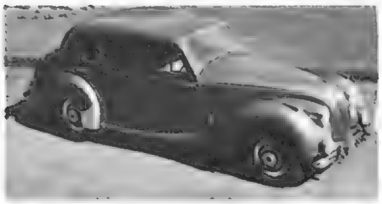
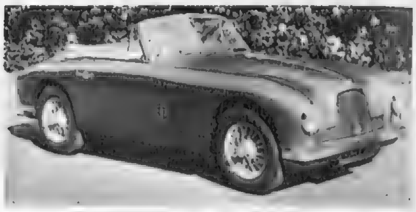


Lagonda 2½-litre Saloon.

THE WORLD OF MOTORING

TWO REAL CARS

By William Hartley



Aston Martin DB II: Drophead Coupé.

RECENT happenings are liable to remain so clear in the mind that they tend to overshadow earlier events when reviewing the year that has just gone. Even allowing for that, I can fairly say that my memories of motoring in 1951 are dominated by the experience of driving two real cars within one week in December—the Aston Martin DB II. and the Lagonda 2½ litre.

The Aston Martin is the car that has done so splendidly in sporting events—including the Le Mans twenty-four-hours performance, when all five cars to start finished the course in worthy places. What struck me first was the ease with which I settled down to this car. After all, it is capable of 125 m.p.h., and to set off in normal traffic, bound for the industrial Midlands, is, perhaps, something to think about. The ease with which the controls came to hand and performed their functions was a credit to design and manufacture. The car is as docile as a lamb in thick traffic and as fierce as a dragon when called upon. On only a short stretch of open road, I reached 110 with ease, and the brakes, so vital in a high-speed car, gave me every confidence to drive really fast. The result was a grand experience and a very fast time for my journey. I had the drophead coupé, and the almost luxury finish and consideration for comfort made it pleasant in that respect, too.

The windscreen washing device, by the way, I found to be a real aid to bad-weather motoring . . . a very good standard fitting. Starting on a frosty morning with the electric starting device was perfect, too. Here, indeed, is a car that fills at least two rôles extremely well, and it is difficult to offer serious criticism. I will, however, make two points worth consideration by the makers, and their very nature will serve to show how highly I think of the car.

The door-lock is on the nearside. Thus, one has to unlock that door and then unlock the offside door from inside, as it is not easy to slide across to the driver's seat. The operation is quite formidable and it involves lying almost full-length across the seats to reach the offside door-handle. That also serves to show the width of the seats, and thus their three-abreast function. The second point is more petty. There is a master-switch that isolates the entire electrical system and, being conscientious, I always switched off when I left the car. Result: The electric clock stopped each time. I am told it cannot be wired otherwise, so I hope to see a clockwork clock for the future.

This splendid engine is the "Vantage" version of the design. Highly tuned and operated on high octane fuel only, it gives remarkable output for 2½ litres. Thus, I was interested to take over a few days later the 2½ Lagonda, which is powered by the standard version of the same unit. I had the Saloon model and at once set off on a 200-mile run into Shropshire.

The instrumentation is similar to the Aston Martin, and once more the ease of control was apparent. This "gentleman's carriage," without any effort, let me put in 55 miles in any hour, with normal traffic and, later, darkness to contend with. And the point is, that it was done in a very high degree of comfort.

This machine has independent suspension on all four wheels, giving the ability to corner, without trouble, really fast—and probably the best back-seat ride ever. As usual, I put this car to a spell of quiet traffic use, like family shopping, and what a smooth, docile machine she is. The combination of high performance and silky sweetness makes this one of the most satisfactory of all-purpose cars. Petrol consumption was in the region of 20 m.p.g., even though that included some long spells of hard driving.

The engine comparison with the "Vantage" in the Aston is interesting, although not easy to define. At no time in the Lagonda was there any vibration or noise of any kind; starting and power are both first-class. A maximum of about 92 m.p.h. comes quite easily. Thus there is really all one wants in a car, and since I know that the engine is capable of much greater output in "Vantage" form, I felt that the Lagonda engine would have a very long life and retain its tune well. It is only fair to add that in the Aston, the "Vantage" unit was equally free from vibration and the fuel used was surprisingly little. The Le Mans performance proves its tune-holding quality.

Both these fine cars are designed and made to be out of the ordinary. The cost, therefore, is not small. The Aston Martin DB II. is £1850, with another £1029 odd in purchase tax in the drophead version, with the Sports Saloon a hundred less. The Lagonda Saloon runs to £2250, with purchase tax another £1251 odd, and another £75 plus for the very attractive drophead coupé version.

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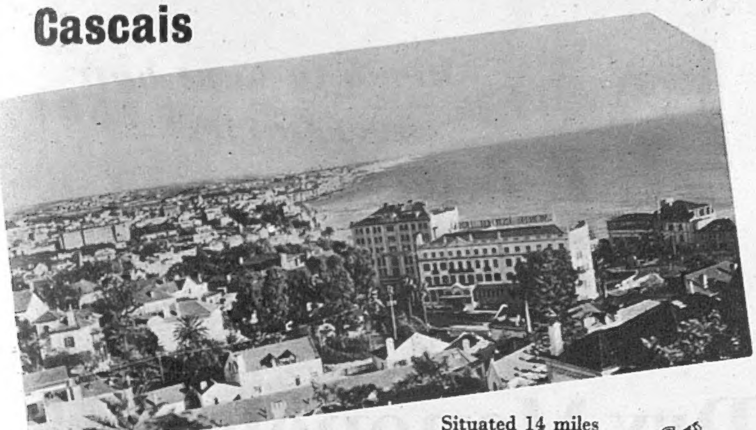

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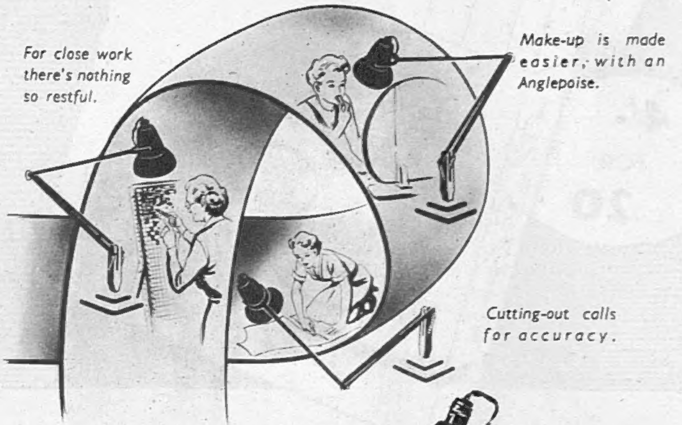

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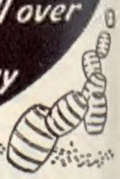

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